BING

SUMMER
2006

No. 143

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

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Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

The International Club Crosby continues to flourish midway through its seventieth year. The Spring months have been busy, with several new and exciting releases. None more exciting than the release of the song "Poor Little G-String", which Bing recorded for the uncompleted film *The March of Time* in 1929. Its inclusion on the six-CD *That's Entertainment* Anthology from Rhino/TCM incredibly marks its first official release, seventy-seven years after it was recorded! Further details appear later in this issue

Other important new CD releases which will be available by the time you read this are a 2-CD set on the Jasmine label titled "The Crosby Brothers - Bing & Bob", featuring the commercial recordings Bob Crosby did with his famous brother, along with radio and film performances. The folks at Sepia Records, who brought us the wonderful 2-CD "Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson" last year, are back with a new 27 track collection titled "Bing Crosby - Good and Rare". Good and rare indeed, as all 27 commercially recorded tracks are new to CD! Also the Jonzos continue with volumes 44 and 45 now available. As always, Ken Crossland has all the information in his *Keeping Track* article.

There are several important books to add to your Crosby bookshelf as well. These include the wonderfully candid *Me & Uncle Bing*, written by Bing's niece Carolyn Schneider, replete with rare, previously unpublished photos of Bing. Highly recommended. Also a definitive biography of Peggy Lee with numerous Bing references titled *Fever: The Life and Music of Miss Peggy Lee* by Peter Richmond. As Gary Giddins notes on the dust cover, "In this definitive biography, Peter Richmond honors her story with a generosity and insight that had me cheering her onward, every step of the way." Pat Shields supplies a review in our *Books 'N' Bing* section. Even the history of rock music has a place for Bing in "What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History" by John Covach. Bing is given a two-page spread in this comprehensive guide to rock music.

Lastly, a film that is seldom, if ever shown on television, due to its rather 'politically incorrect' nature, made an appearance on Turner Classic Movies in May. *Check And Double Check,* starring Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll as Amos 'n Andy, was based on the hugely popular radio series, with Gosden and Correll appearing in blackface throughout the film. But the highlight has to be a rare, early film appearance by the Duke Ellington orchestra, along with the Rhythm Boys singing "Three Little Words" on the soundtrack. Bing, Harry, and Al are represented on film by three members of the Ellington orchestra, lip-synching to their recording through megaphones. This rare gem from 1930 was shown as part of a retrospective on African American portrayals on film on TCM.

So, until we meet again, when Autumn leaves start to fall, let me turn the helm over to Malcolm.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg, and as you will read later in this issue the Editor and the American Co-Editor actually met face to face in June at Greg's home. Pat and I made an extensive tour of the mid-west of the USA and several important matters arose.

Firstly, some of you may have noticed that Andy Williams is now listed as an honorary member on the inside cover. This is a tremendous honour for the club and the full story of my meeting with Andy appears on a subsequent page.

As always when I am in the USA, I cannot resist the urge to do a little more research into Bing's career and I visited the Eisenhower library in Abilene as well as several public libraries. The Eisenhower library is a most impressive institution and I kept thinking how wonderful it would be to have something similar for Bing where students could pore over the minutiae of his life. Realistically, we cannot contemplate anything as grand as that honouring the thirty-fourth President of the United States but it would be nice to get somewhere near it. Gonzaga University has made a useful start and they are keen to do more. But they need funds to do so. We have a letter from our President, Kathryn Crosby, on a subsequent page asking for funds to help Gonzaga develop a really important museum to preserve the memory of Bing's name and career.

Even Liberace has quite a good museum dedicated to him in Las Vegas – surely we can do better for Bing.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings to all our members in this our 70th anniversary year and as Greg has already said, we have indeed seen a good start to our Crosby collecting in the first half of the year.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend the hand of friendship to the following new members. You are amongst friends.

ENGLAND

Derrick Carter (Clifton, Manchester), Mr A R Tolliday (Raleigh, Essex), Albert Wood (Manchester), David Murray (Co. Armagh, N. Ireland).

DONATIONS

The International Club Crosby is indebted to the following members who have been very generous in their gifts to the club.

Hazel Nunn (Kyeemagh, New South Wales. Australia), Jim Watt (Gympie, Queensland, Australia), Marc Matelart (Waterloo, Belgium), Ken Crossland (Dorridge, Solihull), Mario Bellantone (Hildesheim, Germany), Larry Farrel (Co. Louth, Ireland), James Dineen (Glasgow, Scotland), Frank Challenger (Ripley, Derbyshire), Maurice Jackson (Werrington, Cambridgeshire),

We were also very grateful to have received a legacy from the estate of the late Jim Lovell and we thank Jim's executors for their prompt attention to Jim's wishes as they related to the ICC.

DEATHS

With great sadness I draw members' attention to the passing of the following members.

Eddie Rice (Bend. Oregon), Edward J. Mello (USA), Frank Smith (USA), Mrs. Joyce Tanner, (Billingham, Co. Durham), Mr. J E Davenport (Sheffield, South Yorkshire).

Eddie Rice and **Ed Mello** were luminaries in the Crosby world and it was my pleasure to know Eddie over several decades. His work on behalf of Crosby enthusiasts is well known and documented and here I would like to acknowledge the help he gave me as a young collector. I have fond memories of parcels of 45's arriving at my home from Eddie and he also sent me 78's in wooden boxes all of which arrived safely. Amongst the boxes were blue-labelled Parlophone's and Decca white labels that I still cherish. Malcolm reproduces a superb article about Eddie by Vernon Wesley Taylor later in this issue.

Edward J. Mello's Bing discography, published in 1950, was one of the first serious attempts to list Bing's commercial recordings and no doubt his work, in part, inspired the *Road to Bing Crosby* team to carry out their research and ultimately to publish the most detailed account of Bing's commercial recordings ever attempted.

Francis X. Smith had been a Crosby stalwart in the New York area for as long as I can remember and he made an enormous contribution to the various Crosby clubs in years gone by. Ernest Sutkowski advises us that Frank was a U. S. Marine in WWII and was wounded at Iwo Jima. It was during his hospital recuperation that he first met Bing during one of Bing's frequent visits to see wounded military. Frank had a long, successful career as an attorney. He also organised the Fordham Prep School show for Bing in New York in 1976.

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of those we have lost.

TROUBADOUR

Copies of Norman Wolfe's entertaining book continue to be purchased by members and only 14 copies remain for sale. Please write to me if you wish to buy a copy and include a cheque or postal order for £15.99.

ME AND UNCLE BING

Carolyn Schneider's book sales have exceeded all

expectations and Carolyn is now busy travelling around various states, giving book signings. Copies of her book can be ordered direct from Carolyn as follows: -

E-mail Carolyn at: artist71635@msn.com

Or write to:- Carolyn Schneider, c/o White Feather Dist. Co. 9811 W. Charleston Blvd. #2-185, Las Vegas, Nevada. 89117-7519, USA.

Please indicate if you require a softback or hardback copy and what inscription you would like Carolyn to pen in the front cover of the book. Carolyn will advise method of payment.

BING CALENDAR

Work is well advanced for next year's calendar. The price will be the same as last year and most members will receive a separate flyer to enable them to order it now.

MEMBERSHIP

Members may recall that in my last report around 200 members still had to renew their subscription for 2006. Pleasingly, most of the 200 have now paid their dues and we continue with a membership hovering just above 1000 members.

Our loss of members is accelerating as the years pass, and we will need to reflect on how we can continue to provide the excellent service to members given that our income will fall as each year passes.

Fortunately, we have a regular group of members who donate extra sums to the club and with their help we have managed to contain the membership fee at the current level. In future years a membership fee rise will be inevitable unless members can come up with enterprising ways to generate income for the club.

Please let me have your views on this important topic.

JONZO 44 & 45

John McNicholas's excellent series continues with more beautifully transferred sides that bring the tally of recordings in the series to just over 1000. **Jonzo** is a monumental achievement and John, Wig, Geoff and all the collectors who make their precious 78's available for transferring to CD, are to be congratulated for their resolve and dedication in bringing these sides to a wider audience. I would like to encourage all members to support this definitive series. A great review of the series written by Paul Rigby appeared in the July issue of *Record Collector* which should hopefully generate more sales for John.

LEEDS 2006

The **41st** dinner/meeting will be held on **Sunday 1st of October 2006. Carolyn Schneider** (Bing's niece) will be in attendance again and looks forward to meeting as many of you as possible. Details are to be found in the advert displayed elsewhere in the magazine.

Until winter, my kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

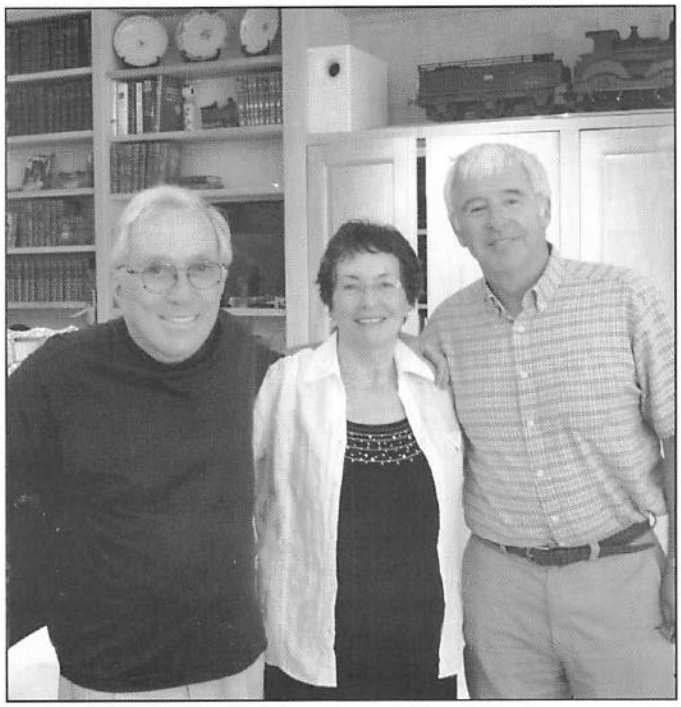
Andy Williams

As mentioned in the editorial, Andy has kindly agreed to become an honorary member of our club. Pat and I visited Branson, Missouri on our recent holiday in the USA and with help from Judy Schmid, arrangements were made for a short meeting with Andy at his Moon River Theatre.

Born in 1927, Andy was part of the Williams Brothers quartet which backed Bing on 'Swinging On A Star" in 1944. Their father had taken the boys from Cincinnati to California in 1943 in the hope that they would break into films - which they did in a small way. One appearance was with Bob Crosby in *Kansas City Kitty* (1944). In 1947, they teamed up with Kay Thompson and put together a much acclaimed night club act. Kay Thompson and the Williams Brothers appeared on Bing's Philco Show in November 1947. The combination eventually broke up and Andy went solo using an act which had been put together for him by Kay Thompson.

He struggled for a while until Bill Harbach (yes, the same man who was behind the Hollywood Palace shows) booked him for Steve Allen's "Tonight" show. After this, Andy starred in a TV show which was the summer replacement for the Pat Boone Show (another honorary member of the ICC) and the rest is, as they say, history. Andy went on to have his own top-rated network TV show and numerous hit records before changing musical tastes dimmed his career for a while. This also coincided with the break-up of his marriage to Claudine Longet and other personal problems affecting him and his three children. Andy bounced back in the 1990s when he re-married and then took the brave decision to build his own $12 million theatre in the burgeoning entertainment centre of Branson, Missouri where he now entertains for several months each year.

In the spring of 1999, Andy found himself back on the record charts once again. In England, a commercial for the Fiat automobile company featured Andy's version of "Music to Watch Girls By", which was a minor hit for him in 1967. The ad became so popular that the record company re-released the song as a single and this time around it was a top 10 hit. Because of the renewed interest in his music, Andy made his first trip to England in a decade and appeared on several television shows and radio programmes. Subsequently, severe problems with a node on his vocal cords (just like Bing in 1931) forced him to stop singing for 8 months but he came back strongly.



Andy with Pat and Malcolm Macfarlane

Andy finished a month's season with Glen Campbell at his Theatre in June. Pat and I saw him on the day before his season was due to end. He was immersed in paperwork and also he had been working on a new album. We met him in his office / cum recording studio at the theatre and I explained that all of us in the ICC had been particularly grateful to him for his appearance on *The Larry King Show* in 2003 (see BING magazine #136) when he had made many nice comments about Bing. I told Andy that it was becoming harder and harder to keep Bing's image alive and when a legendary performer such as Andy comes out on Bing's behalf, it really makes a difference. I asked him if he would accept honorary membership of the ICC and he was happy to accept.

I queried whether Bing was a particular influence on Andy in his formative years and he said that no individual singers especially inspired him as he was part of a vocal group and they tended to model themselves on units such as The Merry Macs and The Modernaires.

I mentioned the recording of "Swinging On A Star" and Andy smiled as he recalled how his father had brought him and his brothers to Los Angeles to make films. He had no particular memories of the recording session other than that they were all in awe of Bing. The appearance on the Philco show in 1947 was his next interaction with Bing and mention of this led Andy to sing the opening bars of 'Hello, Hello' when he and his brothers introduced themselves in song.

We jumped ahead to 1966 when Bing appeared on Andy's TV show and he said how great it was to have Bing on the show. He did not have any particular memories of the event as he was taping a programme every week and they all tended to roll into one another with the passage of time. Andy said that he saw Bing frequently in the TV studios and Bing often popped in to see him wearing an old cardigan with a hole in the sleeve. Bing was always generous with his time when they met. I was interested to learn that Bing had written what Andy described as a lovely letter to him when Andy had recorded "The Hawaiian Wedding Song". Bing praised the recording and said how much he liked the song having first heard the original Hawaiian version many years ago in Hawaii.

Our conversation turned to golf. Andy said that he did not normally play when he was working but his co-star, Glen Campbell, had no such reservations and had wanted to golf that morning which they had duly done. For many years, Andy played in Bing's Pro-Am tournament and I suggested that the courses employed looked very tough and I wondered whether Andy had ever qualified to play on the last day. Andy agreed that they were very difficult courses but nevertheless he had managed to get through to the last round. I responded that at least he had beaten Jack Lemmon who had tried unsuccessfully for over 30 years to qualify for the final. Andy smiled as he said quietly "I beat him by one."

Andy stopped playing in Bing's tournament after Bing's death. I queried whether Bing had ever played in Andy's own long-running Pro-Am in San Diego and apparently he never did.

Returning to show business, I had reminded Andy that he had appeared with Bing on The Pearl Bailey Show in 1971. Andy said that he had absolutely no recollection of that show at all which may seem surprising to some of us but bear in mind that this was Andy's job. How many of us can recall what we were doing in our own job in a particular week in January 1971? I have despatched an audio version of the show to Andy to see if it triggers any memories.

Andy helps Pearl Bailey with her coat as Bing and Louis look on.

Finally, having learned that we were from Manchester, Andy said that he hoped to tour the UK next year and appear in Manchester again. We thanked Andy for his time and he agreed to a couple of photos before we departed.

That night, we attended Andy's show which opened with Andy performing solo for a marvellous 50 minutes. A 'doctored' version of the Fiat advert was shown in which Andy finishes up getting the girl and this brought a roar of laughter from the audience. Andy also received sympathetic applause when he said that he was about to sing an Academy Award winning song but it wouldn't be "It's Hard Out Here For a Pimp" which won the Oscar this year. He expressed his disappointment at the current trends in songs.

Andy was followed by Glen Campbell for about 40 minutes and Glen brought on his own daughter to sing a short medley of country and western songs during his set. The finale was Andy and Glen together for about half an hour singing duets. A superb conclusion to a really great show!

After the show, I wandered into the Theatre's shop, which is of course packed with Andy Williams CDs, photos and videos (why can't we have a shop for Bing like that?), and purchased an excellent video "Andy Williams – The Authorised Biography". This runs for 88 minutes and tells Andy's story in depth. It was a pleasant surprise to see the names of our own Greg Van Beek and Ron Bosley in the credits as they had provided photos of Bing for use in the programme.

It's an honour to have Andy Williams as one of our members.

Malcolm Macfarlane

(For further information about Andy Williams, have a look at www.andywilliams.com)

Sinatra At The Palladium

Ken Crossland reports on a show which is proving a great success in London.

I've spent some time lately enjoying the company and lifetime memories of John Joyce, a Crosby collector of over 60 years standing (who should not be confused with the late John Joyce of Gateshead). There's nothing that gets John more riled than the re-writing of history, particularly when it comes to the relative popularity of Bing and a certain Mr Sinatra. "You had to be there to understand", says John "that in those days, the only voice people wanted to hear was Bing, not Sinatra. But you'd never guess that now from what they write about Sinatra."

What John is talking about is virtual history. Virtual history? Yes, it was a new one on me too until I came across this passage a novel called *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell.

> "The workings of the actual past and the virtual past may be illustrated by an event well known to collective history such as the sinking of the Titanic. The disaster as it actually occurred descends into obscurity as its eye witnesses die off, documents perish and the wreck of the ship dissolves in its Atlantic grave. Yet a virtual sinking of the Titanic - created from reworked memories, papers, hearsay, fiction, in short, belief - grows ever truer.
>
> The actual past is brittle, ever dimming and evermore problematic to access and reconstruct. In contrast the virtual past is malleable, ever brightening and evermore difficult to circumvent and expose as fraudulent."

Does that strike a chord? It did with me and going into the London Palladium for its "live" Sinatra show, I did rather fear that I was in for a virtual history lesson.

But I was wrong. The show is a remarkable technological achievement. Sinatra, it seems, had the foresight to film some of his 1957/58 TV series to the best standards then available (he did the same with his Christmas show with Bing). Now, with digital restoration and editing, the marvellously clear images of Sinatra have been stripped down to just the man and the voice. The live bit of the show comes from the integration of these 50 year-old pieces of film with a live orchestra on stage. The band of course has to recreate the original arrangements and tempo, something that it achieves to perfection. The result is flawless. You could mount a strong case for saying that the late 50s Sinatra was as good as he got. The voice still had the soft texture of a young man, whilst the personality had not succumbed to the cult of arrogance that overtook him in later years. What you get therefore are the wonderful Nelson Riddle arrangements played by a great band, with some ever-so understated vocals from Frank that are all the better for being so.

Not everything about the show is perfect. There are too many dancers with too much choreography, whilst the hyper-active musical director drove me to near distraction. But the Sinatra voice is flawless.

The real bonus though is that the history is actual not virtual. Frank himself, using interview extracts from various points in his life, links the songs. Barely 10 minutes goes by before we see Bing on the big screen. "Bing made it seem so easy" says Frank "so much so that I thought if he could do it, then maybe I could too." Later in the show, Frank talks about the label "crooner", seemingly applied these days to anyone from Elvis to Bette Midler. "I never thought of myself as a crooner" says Frank. "Early on, there was Rudy Vallee and Russ Columbo who used to sing with everything coming just from the throat. They were crooners. But Bing was the first singer and that's what I wanted to be."

And so he was. The show is a fitting tribute to Mr Sinatra and a nice piece of musical history too. My route out of the theatre took me past the commemorative bust of Bing that sits in the foyer. I suspect he would have been quite happy with the way the newer fella had told his story.

Ken Crossland

The Demise Of PrimeTime Radio

John Walton has some bad news for us.

PrimeTime Radio, the UK national digital station for over-50s, closed down on June 2.

The station went on the air six years ago as part of Saga Radio's provision, but split from the regional stations in November 2004 when the Saga Group changed hands. It remained on the national digital multiplex until recently, but in the last few weeks it has only been available on internet, satellite and cable.

PrimeTime Radio, more than Saga's regional stations, catered for the older end of the over-50s spectrum and therefore played more Bing. Its demise is a further counter to the ICC's campaign to have more Crosby tracks played on national radio. It is to be hoped that with the arrival of the long-awaited second national multiplex there will be a station to replace PrimeTime, though the chances of this are not good.

In the next year or two, the development of the new WiFi portable internet radios will cause increasing fragmentation of UK radio listenership. Plenty of Bing will be readily available from around the world across hundreds of 'easy listening' and 'smooth jazz' channels but, with so many stations to choose from, how many people will listen? And what bearing will this have on the campaign to raise Bing's profile among those who have never heard him? Chances are we shall long for the 'good old days' where a few stations with wide-ranging playlists could always surprise us with unexpected Bing tracks - and surprise even more those listeners who had never previously experienced his golden tones!

The demise of PrimeTime is a significant moment in the rapidly changing world of radio. Since his heyday, listeners across two generations have been 'discovering' Bing. Does fragmentation mean that this process will grind to a halt?

John Walton

Another Bing Birthday Bash

On Saturday 6th May several ICC members were invited by Barry Whittingham to attend a Bing's Birthday celebration at his home in Nottingham in the East Midlands of the UK. Home? - it's more like a working museum not only of Crosbyana but memorabilia of most other performers from the golden age of entertainment! Though as a group we were smaller in number than last year, we had an engaging afternoon and evening being treated to some rare DVD screenings of Bing's television appearances and other musical delights.

Barry Whittingham surrounded by a contingent of Bing fans

As previously, Barry laid on all the food for two meals during the course of the day and ensured our creature comforts by putting up a couple of us overnight.

Those in attendance were Andy [a local enthusiast], Ken and Mavis Heaton, Barrie Newbold, Trevor Wagstaff, myself Bert Bishop, and, of course, Barry and his faithful Yellow Labrador, Crosby! We are all indebted to our rare CD provider for his generous hospitality.

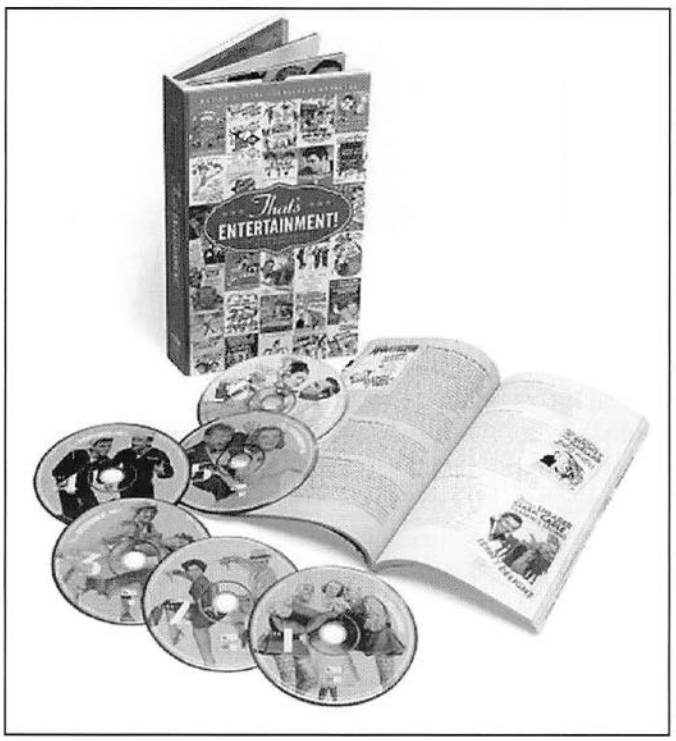
Bert Bishop

(Editor: Barry has prepared some special Bing mugs to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the ICC. See Trading Post for further details).

The Mystery of *The March of Time*

Greg Van Beek gives details of a newly discovered Bing track.

An amazing thing happened on April 25, 2006; a "new" Bing Crosby recording was released for the first time by Turner Classic Movies and Rhino Movie Music as part of a massive six-CD box set titled *That's Entertainment! – The Ultimate Anthology of M-G-M Musicals*. But this wasn't just any recording. It's from the soundtrack of a never completed film made seventy-seven years ago, that only the most ardent of Crosby fans knew that Bing was even a part of!



The film was to have been titled *The March of Time*, scheduled for release by M-G-M in 1930. It was meant to be a follow-up to the successful M-G-M musical-variety extravaganza *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*. The song, "Poor Little G-String", by Fred Ahlert, was recorded by Bing for the soundtrack, and filmed as a big production number– in two-strip Technicolor—in 1929. A record of the song was discovered in recent years, and provided to Rhino and TCM, by fellow ICC member Michael Feinstein.

As Gary Giddins notes in his biography of *Bing, A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years 1903-40* (page 216):

> "Bing was retained for two scenes in the film and billed as 'Bing Crosby, Paul Whiteman Soloist'. *The March of Time* was a strange mixture of veteran performers (Weber & Fields, Fay Templeton), newcomers (Skin Young, Benny Rubin) and extravagant production numbers. Bing sang "Poor Little G-String" backed by an all-girl orchestra and the Albertina Rasch Ballet, but was little more than a prop in his second scene, made up as an old man with wig and moustache listening to a boy violinist. Just as the picture neared completion, the *King of Jazz* fiasco sobered M-G-M accountants. Rather than pour more cash into a sure loser, M-G-M not only shut down its "giant screen carnival", but destroyed most of the film stock. The more expensive numbers were recycled into later pictures, but all that remains of Bing's labors is an eight-by-ten glossy."

Or could the footage still be lurking about somewhere?

The impending release of this rarity in April prompted me to do a little research on *The March of Time* and "Poor Little G-String". I found that seven of the filmed songs from this scrapped film were used in a 1933 M-G-M feature titled *Broadway to Hollywood* (aka *Ring Up The Curtain*), and one other number ('The Lock Step') was used in M-G-M's *That's Entertainment, Part 3* (1994). *Broadway to Hollywood*, as the book "The Hollywood Musical" by Clive Hirschhorn notes, is a backstage musical spanning almost fifty years and three generations, telling the life and hard times of a vaudeville family called Hackett. It starred Frank Morgan, Eddie Quillan, ten year-old Mickey Rooney, Jackie Cooper, Jimmy Durante, Una Merkel, Fay Templeton, and Nelson Eddy, in his film debut. The film contains several sequences in color from the abandoned *The March of Time* revue. The sequences, with dance direction by Sammy Lee, were Dimitri Tiomkin's 'Snow Ballet', 'Hansom Cab Drivers' (Jean Schwartz), 'The March of Time' (Louis Alter, Howard Johnson), 'Bedelia' (Jean Schwartz, William Jerome), 'There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight' (Theodore Metz, Joe Hayden), 'POOR LITTLE G-STRING' (Fred Ahlert, Roy Turk), 'Melody In F' (Anton Rubinstein).

I've had the book "The Hollywood Musical" for about 25 years, and it is quite comprehensive. It's unclear whether the author actually saw *Broadway to Hollywood*, or simply relied on M-G-M studio records concerning the film. But, as was the case with *The King of Jazz*, perhaps prints of the film found in other countries may be more complete. Somewhere in the UK may be lurking a print of *Ring Up The Curtain* with an uncredited Bing Crosby appearance. It does seem suspect, however, that M-G-M would release a film in 1933 — the same year they produced and released *Going Hollywood* — with an appearance by Bing Crosby and not promote it as such. Whereas in 1929 when *The March of Time* was made, he might not have been a household name, Bing Crosby certainly was so by 1933, and promoting him in *Broadway to Hollywood* no doubt would've been a tremendous boost to the film at the box office.

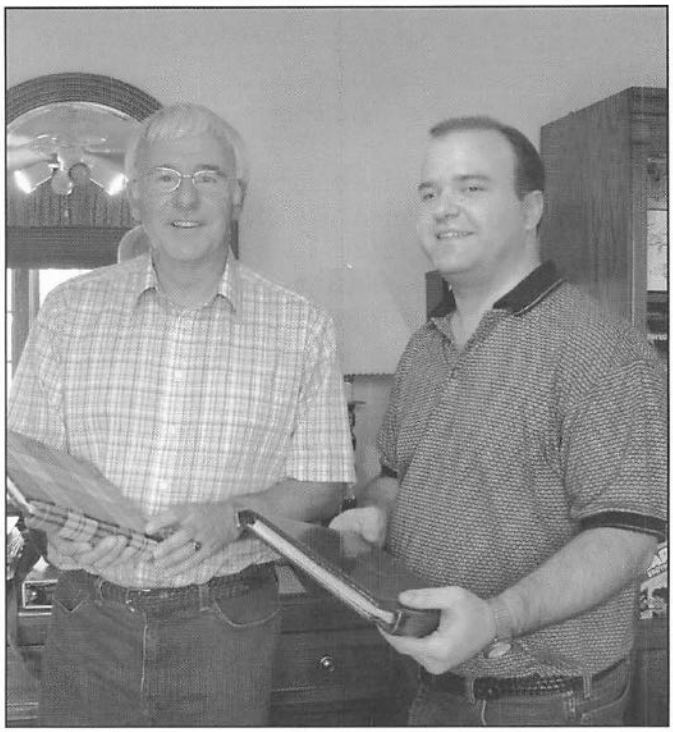
After engaging the folks who post on Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum website message board for any information they may have, it appears that

Broadway to Hollywood exists in the M-G-M archives and has been shown on television on the Turner Classic Movies channel in recent years. Alas, it seems Bing did not appear in the film, at least not in the US release. He may, however, have been included in the UK release of the film, under the title of *Ring Up The Curtain*. The book I have ("The Hollywood Musical") was researched and written by a London-based author (Clive Hirschhorn). So perhaps some of Bing's staunch supporters in the British Isles can do some detective work on this film for us.

Our own Malcolm Macfarlane provided further details on the message board:

> "In BING magazine #111 (page 25, December 1995), Bob Achorn discussed a new history of early sound musicals called "A Song In the Dark" by Richard Barrios. In the book, Barrios discusses *The March of Time*, scenes for which were filmed in the fall of 1929 and the winter of 1930. He mentions the filming of an enormous two-strip Technicolor production number with a giant violin cavorting on screen and Bing just off-camera singing 'Poor Little G-String'.
>
> In BING #112, Geoff Milne clarified this by explaining that in the footage eventually used in the film *Broadway To Hollywood* the violin did not cavort - it rose from the bottom of the screen, the bow placed across the strings acting as a platform for a line of chorus girls. A second line of girls appears from the bottom of the screen, at which point the action is cut to two of the main characters, dressed in Regency costumes, preparing to make an entrance on-stage. As they do so, the scene fades and we are denied the chance to hear Bing singing 'Poor Little G-string'. The sequence Geoff described appears only in black and white.
>
> The information from Barrios was based on the M-G-M production files at the University of Southern California. As we know, the footage was put on the shelf but in late 1930 some of the footage was patched into a German-language M-G-M film (English title: *We Broadcast From Hollywood*). Was the Crosby number included? Don't think we'll ever know!"

The mammoth 108-page book included with the new *That's Entertainment* six-CD box set has a full page devoted to the uncompleted film. It mentions that various pieces filmed for *The March of Time* ended up in other productions released later. In 1932, a strange film made for German audiences, titled *Wir schalten um auf Hollywood* (We Turn Around on Hollywood), was released. In the film German personality Paul Wagner shows up at M-G-M, interviewing such stars as Joan Crawford and letting us see big musical numbers. The sound for this version no longer survives, but the image does, and it's eerie to watch, as Wagner was killed by the Nazis in 1938.



Greg (right) discusses the new CD set with Editor Malcolm during their recent meeting in June.

Much of the rest of the footage ended up in M-G-M short subjects, many of them featuring Ted Healy & His Stooges, who, when they were dumped by Healy, went on to Columbia Pictures and immortality as The Three Stooges.

Gary Giddins mentions in the notes and sources to his book *A Pocketful of Dreams* that some of the Ted Healy Stooges shorts featuring footage from *The March of Time* include *Roast Beef and Movies* (1934) which featured "The Chinese Ballet" and "The Hades Ballet", and *Nertsery Rhymes* (1933, filmed in two-strip Technicolor), featuring "The Story of the Lady In A Fan".

Lastly, an unconfirmed report from 2003 on the Internet Movie Database website indicates "Only the sound Vitaphone reel of Bing Crosby's number survives from *The March of Time*. The film's materials are thought to be lost." This seems rather unlikely, however, since M-G-M was not using the Vitaphone process of sound recording patented by Warner Brothers / First National.

So now, as this film has been lost for over seventy-five years, we may never find the footage Bing filmed for *The March of Time*. But, as the world premiere of the audio of "Poor Little G-String" would lead us to believe, perhaps more pieces of the puzzle are coming together. We can only hope.

For those computer savvy members interested in hearing "Poor Little G-String", it can be downloaded at iTunes for 99 cents. I'd highly recommend purchasing the Rhino/TCM six-CD *That's Entertainment Anthology* box set, however. The set contains four selections from *High Society*; "Well Did You Evah?", "Now You Has

Jazz", "True Love" and "You're Sensational". In addition to the tunes from *High Society* (all beautifully remastered in true stereo with an amazing depth and clarity), the set also includes remastered soundtrack recordings of "Temptation" and "Going Hollywood" from the film of the same name, and, of course, the world premiere of "Poor Little G-String".

The fully illustrated book included with the set is worth the price alone. A gorgeous full color photo of Frank, Grace and Bing from *High Society* adorns the cover. An honor for the film to be sure, that out of all of the many classic M-G-M musicals, they chose *High Society* alone to represent the genre for the cover. Each of the eighty-one films showcased in the set is detailed in chronological order, with recording dates noted and many rare, candid photos included with the synopsis for each. *Going Hollywood*, for example, features a rare candid photo of Bing sitting on the camera platform with the director on M-G-M's screen-life soundstage. *High Society* is given a lavish two-page spread, including a shot of Bing and Frank (each wearing a fedora) rehearsing the "Well Did You Evah?" number.

Greg Van Beek

A Star Grows in Brooklyn

Martin McQuade, with assistance from Professor Michael Hittman, Historian and curator of The Brooklyn Paramount, celebrates the upcoming 75th. Anniversary of Bing's appearances at the Brooklyn Paramount.

Brooklyn, my home town, is known as many things - the city across that bridge from Manhattan, the home of Coney Island and the Dodgers, the birthplace of the Gershwin brothers, the wellspring of the egg cream, the city of churches and of downtown majestic theaters: The Fox, The Albee, The Metropolitan, and, the grandest of them all, The Paramount.

Situated just a few miles from where I've lived all of my life, The Brooklyn Paramount, located at the bustling corners of Flatbush Avenue Extension and De Kalb Avenue, has always held a particular fascination for me. It was here, from February 12th – March 24th, 1932 that Bing Crosby continued to cast the sensational spell that had utterly captivated New York Paramount Theater audiences for the prior fourteen weeks, from November 6th, 1931- February 11th, 1932. (Crosby returned to the New York Paramount on March 25th, 1932, just one day after his Brooklyn contract expired, and continued there until April 7th, 1932 at the unprecedented salary of four thousand dollars per week.)

During Crosby's first week in Brooklyn, more than one hundred thousand fans filled the auditorium's four thousand, four hundred seats for six daily shows, additional ones during the weekends. His six weeks here were entirely sold out. My mother, now ninety-two, still recalls the excitement that rang through New Utrecht High School in Bensonhurst that winter when the news was announced that the heartthrob of the day would grace Brooklyn. She vividly remembers seeing Crosby, donned with a straw hat, take the stage and cavort with Lilyan Tashman with insouciance and a devil may care quality that utterly captivated and charmed her. This date was auspicious indeed; she even spent what little Depression-era money she had on a new pair of red high-heeled shoes.

Crosby made meteoric advancements in artistry, stature, and appeal during these five months in New York. With a few Mack Sennett two-reelers in general release and having just emerged, on Nov. 5th 1931, as radio's Cremo Singer, Crosby was also beginning to taste success as a recording soloist. Just consider some of the classic discs he waxed in New York during these 153 days in Gotham: Where the Blue of the Night, Dinah, Can't We Talk it Over, How Long it Will Last, My Woman, Shine, Face the Music Medley, Paradise, and St. Louis Blues (recorded the day before the Brooklyn engagement commenced). This was indeed a seminal time for him, and it has always given me immense satisfaction that Brooklyn witnessed, for a while, his incendiary development.

Like Bing Crosby, The Brooklyn Paramount was just beginning its long reign of entertainment supremacy, having just opened its fabulous Baroque doors on March 24th, 1928 as the first picture house in the borough to be especially equipped for sound. It immediately became established, not only as Brooklyn's prime exhibitor for Paramount Pictures, but also as a much heralded venue for many of the great jazz and vaudeville headliners of the day, such as Duke Ellington and his Cotton Club

Orchestra, Cab Calloway and his Cotton Club Band, The Mills Brothers, Burns and Allen, Mildred Bailey, Ethel Waters, Rudy Vallee, Connee Boswell, and Russ Columbo. In fact, Columbo preceded Crosby's stint in Brooklyn, appearing there since January 1st, 1932, and entertained at the New York Paramount while Crosby was in Brooklyn. It has long been rumored that the two singers, well into their battle of the baritones, would occasionally startle their fans by swapping appearances, an arrangement affording Crosby a familiarity with the city's mass transit system and gaining him the sobriquet, The Subway Crooner.

Live shows at the Brooklyn Paramount ceased by the mid thirties, but the fifties saw a renaissance with legendary concerts featuring, among others, Stan Kenton's Festival of Modern American Jazz, Norman Granz' Jazz at the Philharmonic, The Birdland All Stars, and The Alan Freed Rock and Roll Shows. This gilded Mecca of pop culture closed as a cinema palace in 1962 (*Hatari* was the last cinema attraction) and as a music arena in 1971 (Duke Ellington returned at that time.) It is now home to the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University.

Amazingly, much of the theater is extant, a fact made abundantly clear to me while taken on a tour on April 28th, 2006 by the university's resident historian and curator, anthropology Professor Michael Hittman. Even the towering façade of the multi-storied building is basically the same. If one could ignore the students and faculty streaming the sprawling, balconied lobby, a fantasy could easily be induced of assembling for a spectacular show; and if placed just in the right position in front of the vast, seemingly pristine, vaulted golden-arched stage, with one of the original twin Mighty Wurlitzer organs stunningly still alongside and caryatids glancing down from high above, one could consign to oblivion the yellow basketball court fashioned out of the orchestra floor, and, as the gymnasium recedes, imagine being ushered to a seat as Crosby the emcee and vaudevillian is about to stride the stage.

Professor Hittman's passion for this venerable edifice is intensely palpable and infectious; and he has such a high regard for Crosby that he invited me to guest on his jazz radio program to play several of his recordings from 1928-32 and to discuss his impact on popular music. (The show will eventually be archived at WLIU, an affiliate of National Public Radio.) He has made it his personal crusade to focus attention on the theater's cultural heritage. In 2004, he chaired a conference and concert entitled, Remembering Jazz at the Brooklyn Paramount, with the involvement of many noted scholars of the idiom, including Phil Schapp and Gary Giddins.

Professor Hittman has collected an impressive collection of memorabilia and information pertaining to The Brooklyn Paramount. The following is a documentation, which he has painstakingly compiled from advertisements in contemporary newspapers such as The Brooklyn Eagle, of the promos and bills of fare of Crosby's six weeks in Brooklyn, including the films which were part of the presentations.

February 12th, 1932

Wayward w/Nancy Carroll, Richard Arlen.

& On Stage:

Brooklyn's first chance to hear him - Bing Crosby, the Rhythm Boy who made good! An indefinite stay. He's hot! He's Torrid! He's your favorite torch singer of songs you love. Everybody will like Bing, a regular fellow. Be among the happy thousands to welcome Brooklyn's new stage pal. Hear him sing, heading the greatest show you ever enjoyed.

w/Lilyan Tashman, Brooklyn's own wise cracking screen star, (Tashman would co-star with Crosby the following year in *Too Much Harmony*.) Milton Douglas, Sid Silvers, The 6 Steppers, Merle Clark and Elsie Thompson, and sixteen Danny Dare Dancers. (Dare would go on to choreograph *Holiday Inn*, *Star Spangled Rhythm*, and *Road to Utopia* and to produce *Road to Rio*.)

TODAY
BROOKLYN Paramount
FLATBUSH AT DE KALB
Doors open at 10:30 A.M.
Brooklyn's First Chance to See Him!
He's Hot — He's Torrid! He's your Favorite Torch Singer of Songs you Love!
BING CROSBY
Everybody will like Bing — A regular fellow. Be among the happy thousands to welcome Brooklyn's new stage pal. Hear him sing!
Heading the greatest show you ever enjoyed!
Extra! Extra!
Brooklyn's Own Screen Star! Wise-cracking! Beautifully gowned!
LILYAN TASHMAN
IN PERSON
In a specially produced comedy presentation with
SID SILVERS 6 STEPPERS
MERLE CLARK & ELSIE THOMPSON
Sixteen Danny Dare Dancers
Two Women In His Heart!
HIS MOTHER — jealously shielding him from the girl he loved;
HIS SWEETHEART — devoted, struggling to smash the mother love barrier that stood between her and happiness.
WAYWARD
A Paramount Picture with
NANCY CARROLL
RICHARD ARLEN
PAULINE FREDERICK
Only the Brooklyn Paramount Has such Exceptional Entertainment!

February 19th, 1932

Nice Women w/Sidney Fox, Frances Dee.

& On Stage:

Extra! Extra! 2nd Big Week! Held over to satisfy the demands of the thousands, who will thrill again to

radio's greatest Star! In Person, Bing Crosby, singing the love songs that are thrilling a nation!

w/Vox and Walters, John and Edna Torrence, the Bredwins, Miriam Lax, The David Bines Ballet, Merle and Elsie, the Paramount Orchestra in Holiday Overture.

Doors open today at ten-thirty a.m. $.25 till 2 p.m.

February 26th, 1932

Broken Lullaby (formerly The Man I Killed) w/Lionel Barrymore, Nancy Carroll. (an Ernst Lubitsch production)

& On Stage:

Third Big Week! By Popular Demand, Nothing Like It Before! Now In His Own Show! Written By Bing Himself! Bing Crosby, In Person!! Bringing to Brooklyn all his movie tricks Plus his Hotche melodies!

w/The Collette Sisters, Fields, Smith, and Fields, Kendall Capps.

Merle and Elsie will do a puppet show operating them on the manuals of the organ!

And Special Attraction: Burns and Kissen.

March 4th, 1932

Strangers in Love w/Fredric March, Kay Francis, Stuart Erwin.

& On Stage:

Bing Crosby in "Time Goes By" His own idea of musical comedy newer than next year's "Follies."

w/international comic favorites Yorke and King (comedy laffs for everyone), radio's maestro Rubinoff & his Magic Violin (triumphant return) presenting his own inimitable music w/ the Paramount Concert Orchestra.

Plus: Madeline Killeen, Reilly Kids, Warren Boden, and Merle and Elsie (a merry song spree at the twin organs).

March 11th, 1932

The Wiser Sex w/Claudette Colbert, Melvyn Douglas, Lilyan Tashman, William Boyd, Franchot Tone.

& On Stage:

Bing Crosby! Have a fling with Bing in Big Whoopee show.

And the famous musical comedy star Johnny Burke, (it is not known whether this is Crosby's perennial lyricist) The Three Swifts, Ayers and Rene Company, Dancing Beauty Chorus, Merle and Elsie at Brooklyn's only twin organs! The Paramount Concert Orchestra in Holiday Overture Melodies of "Erin".

Doors open at 10:30 a.m.; $.25 before 2p.m. everyday but Saturday and Sunday for the big show and screen show.

March 18th, 1932

Dancers in the Dark w/Miriam Hopkins, Jack Oakie, Lyda Roberti.

& On Stage:

Bing Crosby! Extra!! Farewell week! Enjoy the singing of radio's popular star! Come Thrill to "Bing" as he cuts loose with his hottest rhythms in the final and best show of his sensational engagement!

Pola Negri (in an original dramatic sketch by Jack Lait).

Plus "Revue International," cast of fifty - Big Stage Show in six scenes w/ Yacopi Troupe, Lee Gail Ensemble, David Bines Ballet, Merle and Elsie.

These vaudeville programs at The Brooklyn (and New York) Paramount gave Crosby an ideal opportunity to hone his skills as a bard (note that he wrote the third week's show, and possibly contributed to the fourth) and to cultivate his inimitable flair as a master of ceremonies, which saw its culmination decades later in *The Hollywood Palace*. In fact, the above rosters remarkably echo that ABC series. Little did I realize, while watching that show in the sixties, what a continuum it provided to those long ago extravaganzas which took place just a short distance away.

Fred Allen succeeded Crosby at The Brooklyn Paramount (March 25th – March 31st, 1932). Crosby was slated to revisit to the New York Paramount from November 30th – December 13th, 1933 at the then astronomical salary of five thousand dollars per week. This engagement had to be canceled, to the doubtless consternation of hordes of fans, due to, as Crosby described, a sprinkling of nodes on the throat. Crosby would never return to appear at the New York Paramount; neither would he ever again perform at the Brooklyn Paramount.

But another Crosby - Kathryn – recently paid a visit to Brooklyn and for the first time beheld this rococo temple of show business lore. On June 6th, 2006, at my suggestion, LIU president David Joel Steinberg, along with Professor Hittman, took Mrs. Crosby on an extensive walk through. We were joined by Provost Gale Haynes-Stevens, Gary Giddins, Ernest Sutkowski (producer of the radio series, The Songs of Bing), fellow ICC member Patti Dey (co-respondent for Bing's Friends and Collector's Society) and reporter Dawn Rubinstein and photographer Tom Callan of The Brooklyn Papers. (An article about this day appeared in the June 10th, 2006 issue.)

Starting in the grand lobby, the tour wended its way towards the area where still looms the awesome and breathtaking stage, occasionally serving as a platform for university musical entertainments, where her husband thrilled so many almost seventy five years ago. While seated at the recently restored organ, not aware of students practicing basketball just feet away, Mrs. Crosby seemed transcended back to the thirties. Any lingering thespian ghosts roaming the area must have been quite disquieted.

We then continued along the hallowed marbled corridors through the glorious Florentine and Granada smoking lounges, winding up at the luxurious powder room section, outside of which hang posters of prominent Paramount pictures. One such poster was for

Arrowhead, starring Charlton Heston. Mrs. Crosby stopped dead in her tracks. "That was my first picture! I had one line. I didn't even get billing."

Afterwards there was a luncheon, catered by the nearby famous Junior's restaurant. It was held in the president's office, formerly the Paramount executive suite, which was adorned with an enlargement of an advertisement for one of Bing Crosby's Brooklyn Paramount shows. In between bites of the world renowned cheesecake, Mrs. Crosby, clad in a matching beige dress and coat, remarked on how astonished she was to see how much of this palatial structure remains intact.

As she departed, Mrs. Crosby seemed invigorated by what she described as an unforgettable and overwhelming experience, casting one more nostalgic, yearning look at a landmark so integral to her husband's maturation as an artist, a building which survives in order to remind us of a day when true splendor could be had for a quarter.

The name of Bing Crosby will always be fondly associated with this cathedral in the heart of the old Brooklyn theatrical district; not only because of his memorable three fortnights there, but also for the staggering amount of his films which received their borough premieres on its mammoth screen. The list, exhaustively researched by Professor Hittman, contains no less than 38 of Bing's films starting with *The Big Broadcast* in 1932 and finishing with the reissue of *High Society* in 1961. This gives testimony to Bing's unique popularity and enduring dominion at the box office.

Other East Coast Doings

A Sentimental Return

In early May, 2006 Robert Spiotto, artistic director of Hofstra University's Community Arts Program and executive producer of Hofstra USA Productions, e-mailed me with an enquiry: was there a possibility that *Kathryn Crosby Remembers Bing* might be performed at the university's John Cranford Adams Playhouse? Once supplied with the details, Mrs. Crosby seemed immediately interested, and asked me to request that Mr. Spiotto call her.

A meeting was arranged in June at Harry Crosby's Fifth Avenue apartment, which sealed the deal, setting the stage for Mrs. Crosby's show, with pianist Eddie Sayegh, to be seen on **Sunday, October 15th, 2006;** a sentimental return to the site where Hofstra University's scholarly conference, *Bing! And American Culture*, was held from November 14th – November16th, 2002. Many bonds were formed and much Crosby examination was made during those magical days, and some of the magic will have certainly been recaptured thanks to Mrs. Crosby's evocative audio/visual offering of songs and reminiscences. It is hoped that an announcement may be made at this event (by way of the table of contents) of the forthcoming Crosby Conference volume, to be published by the University of Rochester Press, consisting of selected papers which were offered during those seminal three days. (The volume will include Bing's Magnetic Tape Revolution, co-authored by this reporter and Ampex historian Pete Hammar). Ruth Prigozy, the Conference director, assures me that every effort will be made so that this much anticipated tome may be promoted at the time.

(Editor: Since Martin submitted his article we have received further details of the show as follows:

Hofstra USA Productions proudly presents
MY LIFE WITH BING
starring Kathryn Crosby - Edward Sayegh, musical director.
Kathryn Crosby remembers Bing through song, images and film.
Sunday, October 15, 2006 at 2 p.m.
John Cranford Adams Playhouse, South campus,
Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York 11549
Tickets: $40 - $35 for senior citizens
All seats reserved

ALL ticket holders will receive a complimentary, autographed copy of one of the following books by Kathryn Crosby: My Life With Bing* or *My Last Years with Bing.*
Tickets on sale beginning August 22 – tel. 516-463-6644 M-F, 11 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. www.hofstra.edu)

Well Did You Evah? A Sensational Gala

A gala screening in Newport, Rhode Island is planned for Saturday, August 12th to honor the demi-centennial of *High Society*. The tribute is to be hosted by The Carnegie Abbey Club's World Leadership Guest Series, 2006 and His Serene Highness, Prince Albert of Monaco. The film will be part of a three day celebration to be held on the club's property, which will include *An Evening at the Newport Jazz Festival* on Friday, August 11th. The bill of fare for the first night, which promises to be a swellegant, elegant soiree, will also include a tribute to Frank Sinatra by jazz guitarist and singer John Pizzarelli.

High Society will be followed by Dinner and Dancing with entertainment provided by Frank Sinatra, Jr. Presentations will be made after the ball. All amenities for the weekend, including golf, tennis, equestrian, and spa are to be provided by the Prince Albert. His mother's organization, The Princess Grace foundation, will be the beneficiary of these proceedings.

Linda Phillips of Phillips Communications, which is handling the logistics for the affair, has been in contact with me and has been provided the addresses of Kathryn, Mary and Harry Crosby, as well as a contact for Celeste Holm, in order for invitations to be extended. Alas, both

Mrs. Crosby and Mary Crosby Brodka, are planning to attend the wedding of a close relative that weekend and are unable to attend. Mary indicated to me that Harry may attend, knowing how important it would be for his father to be represented at this formidable fifty year salute to his oft-claimed favorite film, on the very ground where it took place.

Martin McQuade

Everything old is new again

Army Archerd, the legendary Hollywood columnist, reported on an event featuring our President, Kathryn Crosby, in April.

I've been to the Friars Club in Beverly Hills for many stag star roasts. At one such salty event the always starch-clean Art Linkletter was a late arrival and asked the awesome dais, "Has the word **** been used yet?" To which Buddy Hackett bellowed, "It was in the benediction!"

It was a different Friars Club April 7 as Bing Crosby was remembered by Kathryn Crosby in "My Life with Bing." The ever-pretty blonde, shimmered in a fuchsia-colored two-piece gown by Oleg Cassini as she talked-sang through their courtship, 20-year marriage and three children. One of them, Mary, directed her mother in this show.

Her claim to fame, she laughed, was playing the role of Kristen, the one who shot "J.R." in "Dallas. Larry Hagman was at the Friars with wife Maj. Also on hand as part of Kathryn and Bing's history was A.C. Lyles and wife Martha. He'd known Kathryn since her arrival at Paramount in 1953, the year I also met her, and the year I started writing my column for *Daily Variety*. Bing and Kathryn gave me countless opportunities for "items."

Kathryn solo's all of the songs except "What'll I Do?" when Todd Murray joined her. Music director Edward Sayegh was on piano thruout. On screen, above the stage, clips followed the biography of Kathy and Bing. Their Las Vegas wedding film accompanied singing "True Love." "Dream" and "Accentuate the Positive" followed. There was also footage of Bing and Bob Hope on golf courses. A touching scene showed a happy father, Bing welcoming his first daughter Mary, after five sons. He croons—as only Bing could—"Moonlight Becomes You" to the baby. A classic and classy scene from Bing's 50th anni in showbiz demonstrates how (artistically) compatible the couple was despite the 30-year age difference. "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" is the untop-able finale.

Kathryn returns for two more Fridays at the Friars.

Army Archerd

The Ultimate Endorsement

Jon Oye takes a look at yet another facet of Bing's career.

In 1969, major U.S. magazines carried a full page color advertisement which featured only three simple elements: a photograph of a pitcher of orange juice positioned directly behind the product's packaging, a four-word headline, and beneath that a facsimile signature. The headline read, "The best there is." The signature was Bing Crosby's.

The simplicity of the presentation was due, in part, to a "less is more" trend in the advertising world, which had been gathering steam since earlier in the decade when a minimalist Volkswagen campaign became all the rage. But it also said something about the person who lent his name to the product, and the amount of confidence the corporation that paid for the ad placed in that name.

If the public had ever really believed what it was told by Madison Avenue, those days were already beginning to wane when this Minute Maid ad appeared. In recent years a President had been assassinated, there was unrest in America's inner cities and on college campuses, and the Vietnam War had begun to divide the nation—why should consumers put any faith in what some overpaid group of glorified hucksters was pitching them?

But this was different. This was Bing. If his name

was under the claim, "The best there is", then the claim was legitimized, because Bing himself was still considered by a large portion of the population to be the best there was. However out of fashion or "square" he had become in the eyes of the un-indoctrinated younger generation of that epoch, Bing Crosby was still money in the bank. Someone dependable you could count on. Someone you could *trust*, in a time when the supply of that commodity was beginning to fall short of the demand.

To those readers who, like myself, remember only Bing's Minute Maid era, it may come as a surprise that he endorsed more than 40 products, in print ads alone, over the course of his career, roughly spanning the period following the demise of the snake oil salesman and preceding the advent of the focus group. While such a large roster of endorsements may be viewed with some cynicism in our current age, when the most celebrated of celebrities in the film and recording industries consider pitching more than one or two products to be "selling out" to commercialism (many won't endorse *anything*, unless it's for the foreign market, unseen by the eyes of their own countrymen), it wasn't perceived as such in Bing's heyday. Many a celeb's mug, from Doris Day's to Eleanor Roosevelt's to Enrico Caruso's, could be seen in pre-1960s print, touting the virtues of any number of products.

For better or worse, truthfully or not, the image that advertisers and their clients strove to project was one of wholesomeness and goodness, and the more their celebrity endorsers personified that image, the better. "Cutting edge" was a term used only by razor blade manufacturers.

Among the hundreds of singers, radio personalities, and movie stars of the day, none typified the American ideal of Frank Merriwell-like virtue and rectitude—with an appealing touch of Huckleberry Finn-like independence and roguishness—more than regular guy Crosby. His was no doubt the ultimate endorsement. And if the indeterminate but considerable number of ads he appeared in is any indication, advertising agencies must have constantly been knocking at his door.

Or, more accurately—in the early days—brother Everett's door. Gary Giddins informed me in a recent e-mail correspondence that, up until 1948, Everett Crosby was the one who ostensibly handled Bing's commercial testimonials, though Bing made all the decisions as to what products his name or image would be attached to.

Which included a wide range of items, from RCA radio tubes and Wurlitzer "automatic phonographs" (Juke Boxes) to Chryslers ("'You're the new sensation!' says Bing Crosby of the new Dodge beauty winner") and Oldsmobiles ("Bing Crosby drives a 'Merry Olds' of his own!"). He pushed General Electric radios and, along with his four sons, Schwinn Bicycles; Fleers gum and Calox tooth powder; Chesterfield cigarettes and Royal Crown cola.

A sampling of giddily enthusiastic body copy from a 1932 RCA Radiotron tube ad bearing Bing's image seems worlds away from today's slickly understated ballyhoo:

> "Hear the *real* Bing Crosby! Bing! Radio's latest find—have you heard him? Smouldering torch songs burst into *flame* when they are 'baritoned by Bing.' But if your tubes are old and haggard, Bing's passionate ballads are too hot for them to handle. All Bing's fire goes up in smoke. Give yourself and Bing a break! Have your tubes tested *today*."

By 1945, when Bing was a worldwide institution, the "smouldering flames" had abated to the subdued glow of a lit pipe in a Mastercraft ad:

> "'Fresh, cool and mellow—my MASTERCRAFT Pipe is a real pal', says Bing Crosby. Bing is one man who really knows, and loves, pipes. That he gets his greatest pleasure from a MASTERCRAFT Pipe is understandable when you consider its select pore-processed briar, which insures a mild, mellow-cool smoke. Smoke a MASTERCRAFT yourself—your mouth will respond happily to its ever-fresh taste."

"Fresh, cool and mellow—
my Mastercraft Pipe
is a real pal"
says BING CROSBY
Bing is one man who really knows, and loves, pipes. That he gets his greatest pleasure from his MASTERCRAFT Pipe is understandable when you consider its select pore-processed briar, which insures a mild, mellow-cool smoke. Smoke a MASTERCRAFT yourself — your mouth and mood will respond happily to its ever-fresh taste.
BING CROSBY
appearing in
"DUFFY'S TAVERN"
A Paramount Picture
$2.50, $3.50, $5.00, $7.50 and $10.00
In choice of any shape
Mastercraft
Pipes
Write for free Illustrated Brochure—"Pipe Legends"
MASTERCRAFT PIPE COMPANY, Dept. G, 2 West 47th Street, New York 19, N. Y.
Prized By Pipe Connoisseurs The World Over

The Crosby name had become such a hot property by 1937 that the member of the clan presumably the least likely to engage in the hawking of goods and

services was coaxed into the act. None other than Herself, Kate Crosby, née Harrigan, was featured in a full page, four color ad for Royal Baking Powder, in which she proudly displays a platter of her home made corned beef patties. The headline reads, "'My boy still thinks I'm the world's best cook!' says Bing Crosby's Mother. 'He can't get enough of my corned beef patties.'" For good measure, her recipe for this particular dish is included. And in case you were wondering, the matriarch of the Crosby family gave full credit for the tenderness of her pastries to Royal Baking Powder.

Mr. Giddins also indicated that after 1948, "[Bing's] business was pretty much handled by Basil Grillo, who over time had a lot more discretionary power than Ev had. Larry [Crosby] was also involved in a few endorsements, including those that derived from the Crosby inventions wing, with which Bing had little to do."

BING CROSBY
Co-starring in MGM'S
"HIGH SOCIETY"
in VistaVision • Color by Technicolor
Here's Sweet Music For
Home-Sweet-Home Owners!..
INSULATE FASTER
with
ZONOLITE®
Bing-o...it's done in HALF-A-DAY!
You just can't compare ZONOLITE vermiculite with any other insulating product! Easiest of all to install—you can do the job yourself in half a day! As little as $87.00 for an average attic! And Zonolite is the miracle mineral that cannot burn, actually snuffs out flame. Indestructible as the earth itself.... rot-proof, vermin-proof! Guaranteed in writing to last the life of your home! Saves up to 40% on fuel bills; often pays for itself in two or three seasons! Modernize your home with ZONOLITE INSULATING FILL.... now! See your lumber or building supply dealer for a free estimate on your home.
Here's the only tool you need and it's FREE!
Just Pour It...Level It...Leave It...
Easiest of all insulations to install
Save $50 to $100 Labor Costs!
Mail Coupon for Free Book Today
Zonolite Company, Dept. BHG-126
135 S. LaSalle St. Chicago 3, Illinois
Send today for Free HOW-TO-DO-IT-YOURSELF Booklet
SAVE UP TO 40% ON FUEL BILLS
ZONOLITE
ON SALE AT LUMBER AND BUILDING SUPPLY DEALERS

Bing insulates 1950s Suburbia while the good folks at Zonolite reciprocate with a plug for High Society.

During the early postwar years, while Bing was endorsing Stetson hats, Jayson shirts, Whitman Chocolates (with *Road* costars Bob Hope & Dottie Lamour), Dictaphones, and Wheaties on the recommendation of manager Grillo, the inventions wing—Bing Crosby Research Foundation—was producing products that ranged from the intriguing (the Trip Trap Mouse Trap), to the practical (Rancher Crosby's Coffee Tap), to the slightly bizarre (something called a Breath-O-Lator), each of which sported Bing's reassuring likeness on the packaging. One of the more curious items bearing Bing's blessing that I've come across, which was apparently a product of the research foundation (there's no indication of who the manufacturer was), is a box of Bing Crosby "Leading Lady" Stretch Nylons. I could be wrong, but the line drawing of Bing on the box appears to be blushing.

Keeping pace with the postwar housing boom and the birth of suburbia, Bing was seen in a 1956 Zonolite insulation ad, dumping a bag of the stuff onto an illustration of a typical '50s Ranch style tract house. The families that were moving into all those suburban tract houses in the new age of unprecedented American affluence wanted amenities, and Bing was there to guide them. He was featured in ads for gas appliances, Bolex 8mm home movie cameras (for the youngsters out there, that was celluloid, not video), AC spark plugs, Scotch tape, and Remington electric shavers.

HYDE PARK DAIRIES presents...
"FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD . . .
the Fabulous Formula of . . .
Bing Crosby ICE CREAM
THE FLAVORS OF THE WORLD ARE IN EVERY SPOONFUL
AVAILABLE NOW TO BUILD GREATER ICE CREAM PROFITS FOR YOU!
From the chefs of Paris...the spice merchants of India...the restaurants of Venice...the cafes of Delhi...famous cuisines of Monterrey...the Riviera... Monte Carlo...World Traveler Bing Crosby, the Marco Polo of ice cream lovers, has garnered a vast wealth of choice recipes, famous flavors, master methods of master chefs to create in one fabulous formula, the Bing Crosby Ice Cream. This famous of all ice creams, so distinctive in quality...in texture...in taste, is blended and frozen at the very peak of its flavor from a formula that only Hyde Park Dairies is permitted to use. Only the world's finest ingredients, in just the right proportions, are used to create the taste-thrilling goodness and rich, smooth texture. Premium in quality, Hyde Park's Bing Crosby Ice Cream costs, as Bing says, "Only a pittance more than the ordinary."
HYDE PARK DAIRIES : WICHITA, KANSAS

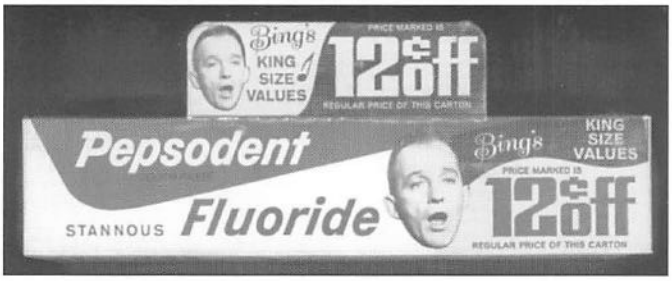
The mystery of the phantom ice cream—were all those empty boxes with Bing's picture on them ever filled?

One of the Crosby collectibles that turns up most frequently in flea markets and online auctions is the Bing Crosby Ice Cream box. Of the scores of these I've seen, not one of them appeared to have ever been filled with ice cream. When I began to doubt that there ever was a plant that actually produced or distributed the

product, I stumbled across a 1953-54 concert program for, of all things, the Wichita, Kansas Symphony, the back cover of which features a full page advertisement for the elusive dairy product. The copy promises great things:

> "From the chefs of Paris...the spice merchants of Venice...the cafes of Delhi...famous cuisines of Monterey...the Riviera...Monte Carlo...World traveler Bing Crosby, the Marco Polo of ice cream lovers, has garnered a vast wealth of choice recipes, famous flavors, master methods of master chefs to create in one fabulous formula, the Bing Crosby Ice Cream."

That must have been some pretty terrific ice cream! The copy goes on to say that it was "blended and frozen at the very peak of its flavor from a formula that only Hyde Park Dairies [of Wichita] is permitted to use." Perhaps Hyde Park Dairies' production capabilities were somewhat deficient, which would explain why none of those empty extant ice cream boxes show any evidence of having once been filled.



Could Bing be singing, "You'll wonder where Ol' Ski Snoot went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent?"

In the 1950s and early '60s, Bing was again pitching for Oldsmobile, which was then sponsoring his annual Pro-Am. He was also endorsing Mercedes-Benz at around the same time, in an apparent conflict of interest. Mercedes would retain his services again, posthumously, in a handsome mid-'90s television and print campaign that, besides Bing, also featured Marlene Dietrich, Errol Flynn, and other Golden Age celebrities, posing alongside their respective Mercedes' in sepia toned photographs. Bing's 1934 recording of "Love Is Just Around the Corner" played in the background of the TV spots, while the photos were presented in a montage.

Though Pepsodent toothpaste was more or less synonymous with Bob Hope, whose radio program the company sponsored in the 1940s, Bing did a stint for the rack shellac in the early '60s, his face gracing point of purchase displays in grocery and drug stores, as well as the boxes in which the tubes of toothpaste were packaged. Jerry Colonna, Bob's former radio sidekick, even accompanied Bing in the TV commercials, which ran during one of Bing's specials.

In the middle of his Minute Maid period he became the poster child for La-Z-Boy recliners, which likely helped perpetuate his latter day laidback, grandfatherly image nearly as much as the annual Christmas specials did. As in the orange juice spots and the specials, in which he featured his family, he appeared with his wife Kathryn in some of the La-Z-Boy ads. The two of them looked every bit the embodiment of genteel landed gentry, comfortably reclining in their Sunday best, surrounded by the accoutrements of the good life. "Take the advice of the ol' master of relaxation, Bing Crosby," reads a 1967 ad, "...take a comfort break in a La-Z-Boy Reclina-Rocker. It's a haven for restful relaxation...reading...TV viewing or just plain doin' nothin' in... The little woman will find her chair, too...she can select the style that will best match the décor of her home."

Bing Crosby says,
"Man, this is really relaxing . . .
an evening at home with Kathryn
in our LA-Z-BOY chairs."
LA-Z-BOY... a family affair
with the BING CROSBYS

Bing and Kathryn enjoy their La-Z-Boy recliners in their Sunday best, in a 1967 ad.

By the mid-1970s, aside from the ubiquitous Minute Maid spots and the occasional Ducks Unlimited testimonial, Bing's advertising activity seems to have subsided appreciably. Not at all surprising, considering his new commitment to the concert stage at about this time, along with his return to a more consistent recording schedule, both of which he applied himself to with renewed vigor. Nevertheless, he did find the time to record a television commercial with his buddy Phil

Harris, to promote a joint venture of theirs, Herradura Tequila, in 1976. Presumably Phil had more of an interest in this project than did Bing—legally speaking, of course.

It was said at one time that the two greatest pitchmen in TV history were pioneer hosts Arthur Godfrey and Jack Lescoulie, who supposedly could sell anything, especially when the sponsors wanted to project wholesomeness. Bing's reputation for selling a product on television likely rivaled theirs. While his involvement in the medium of print has been the primary subject of this essay, it should be noted that, where celebrity endorsements were concerned, television brought about a whole new set of ground rules in the 1950s and '60s. According to Gary Giddins, whom I can't thank enough for his input, Frank Sinatra may have pushed cutlery on the tube when he was trying to survive in 1952, but after he re-established himself he wouldn't allow his shadow to darken a TV spot again (other than for casinos), and, by and large, most other major celebrities wouldn't either—a trend which continues to this day. [A noteworthy exception to this trend is the celebrity voice-over; stars like Gene Hackman, Alec Baldwin, Richard Dreyfuss, and Julia Roberts can be heard (but, significantly, not seen) hawking various products in television spots these days.]

Bing was no different, and, in the words of Mr. Giddins, was "very, very particular about lending himself to TV ads." As a result, procuring his name was considered a major coup, and it was a very big deal when he appeared in those Minute Maid spots with Kathryn and the kids, despite the fact that he owned a piece of the company.

It would be nearly impossible to gauge, but it's certainly likely that Bing was featured in more ads than any other A-list celebrity, ever. Which should come as no surprise to Bingophiles, considering we're all aware of the fact that for decades he was among the most highly regarded and trusted figures in the United States, and, for a healthy chunk of that period, was arguably the most popular person on the planet. As a result of that high esteem, he was also among the most sought after by marketers and admen, as evidenced by the prodigious number of advertisements that bore his name or image—culminating in 1969, when his signature alone would serve as the tagline for a nationally circulated ad.

So, to the many facets of Bing's enduring legacy—best selling and most influential recording artist, top radio host and personality, #1 box office movie star, national icon—we might well add "most prolific endorser of products."

Jon Oye

(Editor: Fascinating! An awful lot of research has gone into this article and we thank Jon for undertaking it. Our thanks are also due to him for the montage he has prepared for our back cover which pulls so many of the adverts he has mentioned together.)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $15.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $17.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £10 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal price. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances. Finally, Michael has spare copies of some LP boxed sets of Bing material and he will be happy to make these available for nominal figures to members.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Peter Gray, 3674 Carolyn Line RR4 Orillia ON L3V 6H4, Canada

WANTED: A good clear pristine copy of Bing's 50th Anniversary Kraft Music Hall production. From Ambassador College. In VHS Format. Please contact Peter T. Gray, Collect at (705) 325-3161.

Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ, UK (Tel: 01664 851930, e-mail: kenneth.mason@ntlworld.com)

BING BINDERS

Ken offers specially made binders for storing up to ten copies of BING magazine. The covers are blue with BING engraved in gold on the spine. Cost is now £7.50 for the UK, £8.50 Europe and £9.50 for rest of world (all including postage).

Bert Minister, 16 Stirling Close, Bridgehall, Stockport SK3 8NU, UK (Tel: 0161-480-0722)

Bert offers 15 Bing LPs (including 3 Corals and The World Record Club Boxed set "The Very Best of Bing"), a commercial video "The Bells Of St. Mary's" and over 50 cassette tapes of Bing (some radio shows, some record transfers – a real mixed bag, could be interesting to explore). £12 the lot.

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR, UK (Tel: 0121-359-7399, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs (and LPs) contact Ray.

Redmond Nostalgia Company, P O Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073-0082, USA. (Tel: (425) 774-1819, Fax (425) 774-8076, web site: http://www.redmondnostalgia.com/

e-mail: redmondnostalgia@aol.com)

David Kiner offers a comprehensive list of 281 Bing Crosby CDs. Each CD is one hour long containing two 30 minute radio programs, unless otherwise noted. All programs have been professionally re-mastered for excellent sound quality. All CDs are professionally printed and come sealed in cases with printed inserts.

See the company's web site for details of what is available.

Clive Roberts, "Dale View", 67 Leeds Rd., Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 3BW, UK (Tel: 01943 851449, email: clive@robertsclive.wanadoo.co.uk)

Clive has been receiving many requests from previous clients to put on another Hollywood Tour similar to the Starline trips we reported on some years ago. He has now organised such a trip for October 2007 and please see details in the advert on the next page.

Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25C Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG6 8RZ, UK (Tel: 0115 9134240, email: barry.whittingham@ntlworld.com)

To celebrate the ICC's 70th Anniversary, Barry has had a supply of mugs produced which will bear a coloured imprint (which is shown below in black & white). He will have them available at our Leeds meeting in October at a price of £4.50. They are also available by post in the UK with an extra £1 being charged to cover p. & p.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please. He also offers BING magazines #93 to #140 as he needs to make some space at home.

VISIT HOLLYWOOD AND LAS VEGAS ON OUR 2007 FULLY ESCORTED EXCLUSIVE TOUR

IF YOU HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED ABOUT VISITING HOLLYWOOD BUT NEVER GOT ROUND TO IT HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY ON OUR FULLY ESCORTED TOUR IN 2007

Departure date is Monday, October 1st 2007 and you have the following choices:

ONE WEEK IN HOLLYWOOD AND ONE WEEK IN LAS VEGAS (14 nights)

TWO WEEKS IN HOLLYWOOD (14 nights) or ONE WEEK IN HOLLYWOOD (7 nights)

NOTE: Total cost of holiday and hotels are not confirmed at the time of this magazine going to Press but anyone requiring more information should ring Clive Roberts on 01943 851449.

Visit the prestigious "HOLLYWOOD COLLECTORS AND CELEBRITIES SHOW" and meet in person some of your favourite stars and character actors. (subject to their availability)

SEE INSIDE LEGENDARY HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS – Paramount, Warner Bros., Universal, and the Sony Studio (formerly MGM).

VISIT HOLLYWOOD CEMETERIES to see the last resting places of some of your favourite stars including Bing Crosby, Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart, Alan Ladd, Tyrone Power, Jack Benny, Al Jolson, plus Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy (at different cemeteries).

Buy authentic and rare Hollywood memorabilia at the COLLECTORS BOOKSTORE on Hollywood Boulevard. (Much of the material sold here is not available in the U.K. so collectors will find it entertaining just to browse through the vast amount of items on sale).

VISIT PALM SPRINGS for its excellent shopping and to see the last resting places of Frank Sinatra, Alice Faye and other great stars.

FREE TICKETS are available for live tapings of many current TV shows at Paramount, Universal and NBC etc.

LAS VEGAS. Visit the many incredible hotels that have been built on the Las Vegas Strip in recent years. You will have seen them on TV but to walk through "in person" is the experience of a lifetime. Fly over the spectacular GRAND CANYON, visit HOOVER DAM and browse in the sensational Las Vegas Shopping Malls that have to be seen to be believed.

Send for further information and booking form today:
Mr Ian Bishop, Uniglobe Preferred Travel, 11 South Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 6SB.

IMPORTANT: Any questions about this Tour should go to CLIVE ROBERTS on 01943 851449.

We can also offer optional side trips to SAN FRANCISCO, SAN DIEGO or CARMEL AND MONTEREY. (These visits are not escorted).

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) http://www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for imported CDs from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net –

website:

www.geocities.com/one_sonoma_rose/BingsHomePage.html

The Society celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:

www.mcckc.edu/~crosby

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a newly revamped discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698

e-mail: gerry@stonestreet13.freeserve.co.uk,

website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £21 for Europe and £30 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/ - see also http://www.mikescaife.btinternet.co.uk/ for Mike Scaife's Scottish branch and his excellent Great Song Stylists website)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

1. Me and Uncle Bing

By Carolyn Schneider, published through Xlibris Corporation ISBN: 1-4134-9911-2, 158 pages, available in hardcover and softcover.

Carolyn Schneider sees Bing Crosby from the point of view of a niece three decades younger. When she was barely turning 10, he was already being celebrated as the most famous voice in the world and the most popular of film stars. And for Bing, there were still fresh triumphs to come.

Carolyn's mother, Mary Rose, was one of Bing's two sisters. She was younger than Bing by three years to the very day. She was close to her brother and that helped Carolyn know her uncle quite well. Her book, written with Lin Anderson and self-published, provides 157 pages of Crosby family stories. Crosby fans will enjoy the tales and the 140 pictures-some of them familiar, but many of them not.

This is a positive look at Bing. Carolyn says she does not intend "to dig up the dirt." She sticks to that. If the line implies there is some dirt to be dug, you won't find it here.

As a college graduate in 1954, Carolyn yearned to get into show business. Bing not only arranged for her to begin on a modest scale at the Paramount studio, he and Dixie took her in for a while at their Holmby Hills mansion. From there it was one family event after another, right up to the Christmas parties at Bing and Kathryn Crosby's Hillsborough home and those choice tickets for Carolyn and her mother at Bing's opening performance at the London Palladium in 1976.

While Carolyn avoids most controversy, she does argue for better understanding of Bing's son, Gary, with whom she played as a child. In her view, "tabloid writers" distorted Gary's words to smear Bing unfairly as an abusive father.

The most haunting passage is the book is the account of Dixie's death in 1952, as passed on by Mary Rose to her daughter. In Dixie's last moments, we're told, Bing slipped on her finger the simple gold wedding ring from their early married life, replacing an elaborate band she had worn. Then he knelt by her bedside, saying over and over, "Why didn't I understand? Why didn't I understand?"

Carolyn makes clear that Bing became the center of life for a huge family, above and beyond his exhausting work responsibilities. Many relatives looked to him for a helping hand, sometimes financial, sometimes just a kind word. How he found time to respond–yes or sometimes no–to all the hands that were reaching out to him is one of the lasting Crosby mysteries, not solved in this book.

Carolyn rejects the notion that he was "distant." When she saw him from time to time, she found him warm and caring. If he sometimes came across as absent or remote, that largely reflected the enormous demands on his time.

In summing up, Carolyn praises "his intellect, his drive and his spirit."

For all of Bing's followers who want to know a little more about the man and the manifold relatives around him, Carolyn's account is telling. And there's no dirt at all.

Bob Achorn

Others who wrote with their thoughts on the book include Peter Moreton (who is known to us in the UK as 'Dr. Swing' from his BBC Radio Northampton broadcasts) and Roger Addey.

What a great read! I grew up during the 40's - an era of great films and big band music. The Crosby 'Road' films were essential viewing and brother Bob excelled in the field of jazz. Through 13 years of producing and presenting a weekly music programme for the BBC the demand for Bing's songs never ceased. Bing brought happiness and a sense of family togetherness and charitable goodness. Carolyn's book has done nothing to dispel this image. I have thoroughly enjoyed her accounts of family life with Bing and involvement in so many of his vocational and business commitments. Through good and bad times how he fitted in everything goodness only knows! But he obviously did find time for things that mattered when it was necessary.

I also enjoyed all the family photographs amply conveying again Bing's ever present love of life no matter where he was or who he was with. Through music Bing has been an international ambassador supreme to be sure. It is apparent he loved his music and loved his family. I was particularly moved by the stories of Christmas with Bing and the Crosby clan; her reminiscences of Pro-Am days; and Bing's excursion into cowboy land. (Now we know why he enjoyed his cowboy songs!)

Referring to his 1976 special concert at The London Palladium, Carolyn recalls 'as the audience filed in.....there were people from all walks of life.....a pure cross section of humanity.....everyone felt as if they were about to see an old friend, who had been away too long' and 'here was Bing singing songs they knew by heart, in the voice that defined the century.'

For all of Bing' s life long fans around the world Carolyn's lovely book has ensured that the legend that is our 'old friend' lives on. Oh, and what a joy to have a bonus DVD! Read it - you'll love it.

Peter Moreton - 'Dr. Swing' BBC Radio Northampton.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and the way it had been written made it a pleasure to read. My congratulations to Carolyn for her effort on our behalf.

Roger Addey, Camborne, Cornwall, UK

2. Fever – The Life and Music of Miss Peggy Lee

By Peter Richmond, published by Henry Holt and Co.; hardcover, ISBN: 0805073833, Price: $18.90 (from Amazon, USA)

One of American music's enduring natural resources was a lady named Norma Deloris Engstrom.....AKA Peggy Lee. In 2002, her death stilled the legend, but not the legacy; and author Peter Richmond covers it all in his book.

Daughter, wife, mother, pop singer, jazz singer, songwriter, actress, diva, drinker, control freak, international star. Peggy Lee was a woman of many parts, and the only time they all converged was in her music. Mr. Richmond makes a persuasive argument for Peggy as the finest female jazz singer of the 20th century. Plenty of backstage details are included in the book's 449 pages, but it's not what I'd call "gossipy." The author's main focus remains the music.

There's considerable space devoted to her relationship with Bing, and it's totally positive and quite well-written. For example...from page 146:

When Peggy stepped in front of the microphone that night, it was with the introduction and imprimatur of Bing Crosby, the reigning god of song. It was the first of some fifty appearances she would make on Crosby's shows over the next decade, a time during which Crosby would become a close friend and ally. Crosby's love for Peggy Lee's music, and for Peggy Lee the woman, was perhaps the single most important factor in the blossoming of her career—and how could it have been otherwise? As an artist, she was following a trail into pop-jazz that no woman had trod, but that Bing Crosby had not only discovered, but mapped. It was with Bing Crosby's sensibilities that Peggy Lee truly identified, on every band of the spectrum.

The Bing picture continues for a couple of more pages, and it's inspiring—even though I'm already well-aware of the points being made. It's just such a kick to see it in print and expressed through the sensibilities of a talented author with whom I was totally unfamiliar until now.

Surely there is no one reading this page who doesn't love at least some of the music Peggy Lee helped create, and—I dare say—there is no one who won't be thoroughly entertained and enlightened by Peter Richmond's classy book.

Pat Shields

3. Best Songs of the Movies

By John Funnell, published by McFarland, soft cover 312 pages ISBN: 0-7864-2193-2. Price: $39.95 (from Amazon, USA)

The book is sub-titled 'Academy Award Nominees and Winners, 1934-1958' and is an in-depth look at the songs nominated for an Oscar in the period under review. Between 1934 and 1958, a total of 160 songs by 114 songwriters received nominations and the author examines each song in detail as well as the film from which it came. Bing is, of course, to the fore with 14 songs listed, 4 of which won the Oscar. It's amazing to note that Bing also covered a good many of the 160 songs listed either on radio or record. Many photographs support the text and there is a bibliography and a comprehensive index. Appendices cover the songwriters themselves with brief pen pictures and also all the songs nominated from 1959-2004.

John Funnell is a semi-retired teacher who lives in Werribee, near Melbourne, Australia. He is a member of the ICC and of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society. This is a wonderful reference book containing many surprises about long forgotten songs which were nominated. It's lovely just to dip into it. Well worth picking up.

Malcolm Macfarlane

4. A Prisoner Of Love

By Tony Toran, BearManor Media. Boalsburg, Pa. 2006. 453 pages with illustrations. $29.95. Available through Amazon Books ISBN: 2-59393-055-0

In an ironic twist of fate, Tony Toran died as a result of a violent accident just a few weeks before his book on Russ Columbo, who also perished violently, came off the presses. Mr. Toran, 79, was badly injured in an automobile accident in Florida in May and died a few weeks later. He had been in ill health for some time.

Sub-title of the book, on which he had worked for several years, is "The Definitive Story Of Russ Columbo" and, while most biographers like to claim that, in this case it probably is true.

It is impossible to write of Columbo, the suave Valentino look-alike whose singing career paralleled the rise of the young Bing Crosby in the early 1930s, without touching upon Crosby. Yet to avow, as Toran does, that without Columbo there would have been no Bing Crosby is unchecked author euphoria.

Posterity, plus the chroniclers of their time, establish clearly who led and who followed from the days when Columbo played violin behind Crosby at The Cocoanut Grove and occasionally filled in for him as a vocalist. "He copied Bing," said Johnny Mercer, who knew them both. "Merely the best of the Crosby imitators," said Sam Coslow.

Toran has done an excellent job of delving into the all too brief life of Columbo, who died of an accidental gunshot wound in 1934, at the age of 26, and in interviewing the handful of people left who knew him. He is at his best in reconstructing the death scene and the police investigation and inquest that followed and at his worst suggesting it may have been the result of a plot master-minded by Everett Crosby to eliminate competition.

If what remains of the Columbo family and

followers wanted someone to champion their idol's cause, they could not have found a better advocate. Toran comes at you fiercely from all sides with mountains of data, far too much in some unimportant areas.

This zeal ultimately betrays him because he sets a goal he cannot achieve, that of establishing Columbo as a seminal figure in the development of pop singing. Evidence to substantiate that simply does not exist.

Norman Wolfe

(Editor: Another who has read the book is Bill Piccone of Philadelphia and he offers his thoughts too.)

Along with my colleague and fellow Philadelphian Anthony Di Florio III, I had the privilege of assisting Tony Toran by supplying source material for this book. I also had the pleasure of meeting Tony at the Bing Crosby Conference at Hofstra University in 2002.

Tony Toran (a member of the ICC) was a writer, producer, arranger, orchestra leader and A & R Director for Countrerpoint Records. 'A Prisoner Of Love' is the only Columbo biography written with the authorization and cooperation of Columbo's family; thus this masterpiece contains dozens of rare photos of Columbo and those associated with him. Columbo had many love affairs, but Carole Lombard was the most serious. Many years later, she stated, "Russ and I loved each other. Eventually, we would have married."

. . . Unfortunately, Russ had many ups and downs during his short career as a singing star, while Bing went from strength to strength making many more records and films than Russ did in 1931-34. Bing appeared on radio more often as well. Columbo was, as Tony Toran put it, "his own worst enemy" when it came to business matters and career planning, in sharp contrast to Bing. Columbo himself referred to it "a case of bad handling all around. I was poorly managed (by his manager, Con Conrad), badly publicized."

. . . Tony Toran did not accept the official version of Columbo's tragic death, and contacted a ballistics expert to hopefully unravel the mystery concerning Columbo's demise. It would be best to read this book and for one to come to his own conclusions.

Bill Piccone

5. The life of Dick Haymes: no more little white lies

by Ruth Prigozy, 283 pages, published by University Press of Mississippi, hardcover, ISBN: 1578065518. List price $30 but available from Amazon for $18.90

Ruth Prigozy is professor of English at Hofstra University and was the driving force behind the wonderful Hofstra Seminar on Bing in 2002.

There was a time when no one would have left Dick Haymes (1918–1980) out of the top class of his contemporaries such as Bing, Frank Sinatra and Perry Como. But now the Argentine-born baritone is known only to those ardent fans and music historians who still claim him as one of the most talented popular singers of the twentieth century.

He worked with several great bandleaders, including Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, before beginning a solo career that vaulted him to Hollywood stardom. In 1944, he worked with Twentieth Century Fox, headlining such hit musicals as Billy Rose's *Diamond Horseshoe* and *State Fair*. Popular recordings such as "Little White Lies," "The More I See You," "How Blue the Night," "For You, For Me, For Evermore," "Speak Low," and "Another Night Like This," made him a top draw at the box office.

Dick Haymes visits Bing on the set of Connecticut Yankee.

In the 1950s, when television took over the media landscape and the appeal of musicals declined, Haymes's career suffered. Despite efforts in the 1970s, he never re-established success. In *The Life of Dick Haymes: No More Little White Lies*, Ruth Prigozy uses over forty personal interviews with singers, musicians, composers, arrangers, and Haymes's family members. She searches archival recordings of "The Dick Haymes Show," films, recordings, music studies, and histories to present a full portrait of this complicated man. Prigozy chronicles Haymes's childhood, his rise in the 1940s, his decline into alcoholism, his multiple marriages—to such leading stars as Rita Hayworth and Joanne Dru—and divorces, and the minor resurgence of his career in Europe during the last years of his life. As you would expect, there are plenty of mentions of Bing.

A review on the Barnes & Noble web site said:

'This is an "I couldn't put it down" book. A compelling read full of highs and lows, surprises and sometimes despair this long awaited biography addresses many of the stories that had been circulating around Hollywood about Haymes and presents the facts for the first time. A must for any fan of the 1940s, musicals, crooners and film stars.'

We understand that Ruth will be in UK in September. BBC Radio2 is broadcasting a four-part documentary on Dick Haymes and Capitol will be releasing his 1950 recordings (Ken Barnes is the producer).

Dixie Lee

You've read the review of her much-appreciated book and now, here's Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, again, as she considers her Aunt Dixie in more depth.

My aunt Dixie was quite a woman. Most people didn't give her credit for anything, she was always in Bing's shadow, but she was one smart gal. She could size up a situation, or recognize a problem, a mile away. I would say she had an intuitive nature and an inquiring mind. She could "sense" things, especially where Bing or her four boys were concerned.

Dixie and Bing out on the town together.

Dixie had an aura about her that drew you into her right away, you wanted to be near her, listen to her voice and watch her move about. She handled herself with grace and self assurance. There was something powerful about her demeanor, even though she was only five foot three. We've been told that she was actually a shy person, but if that's true, you would never know it when you met her.

She was warm, gracious, and had her own sense of class, plus a great sense of humor. She was not one to put on airs, try to impress you with her money, or the title of "Mrs. Bing Crosby". A conversation with Aunt Dixie would be very casual, relaxed and comfortable. She would show interest in you, ask you questions and talk about life in general.

She liked to play backgammon with my cousin Jack (Larry's son) and give him advice on his love life. Jack also told me about the time Aunt Dixie probably saved his life and that of his mother, during a serious flood in the Los Angeles area. It was Aunt Dixie who put everyone into the car and drove to safety, good thing she had her wits about her. Of course she loved music, and when Jack, as a teenager, visited Aunt Dixie, she would give him dancing lessons.

If we can accept the premise that no-one is perfect, and then perhaps we can accept the fact that this beautiful, talented woman had a serious flaw. An idol with clay feet if you will, you might say she had a chink in her armor, or that she was a statue that fell from her pedestal. For Aunt Dixie, that flaw was alcohol.

Her life appears to be a three act tragedy: in her youth she watched Uncle Bing acting like a teenager, excess drinking, keeping late hours, behaving very irresponsibly. In act two, she joined him on some of his escapades and at cocktail parties, except that now she had children who needed her. Act three finds the enchanting Dixie Lee bored and lonely, turning more and more to drinking around the clock. Which came first – trouble in the marriage or Dixie's heavy drinking? You know, that old chicken or the egg question.

When my mother, Mary Rose, asked her brother, my Uncle Bob, what he thought happened to Dixie, why she had become such a heavy drinker, Bob said, "She couldn't handle Bing's success." Not that she was jealous of his fame mind you, but I think as Uncle Bing's celebrity increased, she felt shoved aside, left behind, that she now came in second place. This was a time when she had to share him with the world, it was an invasion of privacy and it made her feel lonely and left out of his life.

Granted there were many times when Bing was inconsiderate, going places without her, leaving her alone to fend for herself. I don't know why he treated her that way, whether it had anything to do with her drinking or not. To the best of my knowledge, Dixie never caused Bing any embarrassment, none of us in the family ever saw or heard of her behaving badly. Never saw or heard of her falling down or acting drunk.

As Uncle Bing said at her deathbed, "why didn't I understand?" We know that he had a soft side to his persona, but we can only wonder why he failed to show it to her, why he couldn't hear her cries for help. Why was it that saying "I love you" was so difficult for him, even in a song?

I know for a fact that Aunt Dixie loved him for the many things he did for her and the lifestyle he provided. But I sensed that she kept trying to prove herself to him, that she somehow felt unworthy of his love, that she had

low self esteem. For whatever reason, this terrific woman came to a point in her life when she avoided the public, hid behind a bottle, and those blue tinted glasses of hers.

In any event, we all loved her, just for being Dixie.

Carolyn Schneider

(Editor: Thanks, Carolyn, for your sincere thoughts. As previously mentioned, Carolyn and husband Dirk will again be attending the annual Leeds meeting in October.)

The 'common-bond' between our favourite singers

A 'thread' on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum back in April involved various contributors listing their favourite singers and eventually our own **John Walton** of Lincoln in the UK joined the debate. He said:

"The wide range of artists named in response to this topic seems initially to blow away the idea of a 'common bond'. If there is such a bond, and if we are to stand a chance of identifying it, we surely have to examine the Bing characteristics to which we've responded over the years. I'm sure we would all define these in our own individual ways, but could I venture the following personal list:

Characteristic 1: Pleasant Tones.

Bing used the invention of the microphone to produce vocal sounds which, at all stages of his career, were easy on the ear. This was consistent across all the many types of song he sang. Throughout his career, he was mindful of singing notes which, though accurately pitched, might not 'sound too good'. (Though at the London Palladium in 1976, I noticed recently, he was still singing 'Gone Fishin'' in the same key in which he and Louis Armstrong had introduced it in 1951!)

Characteristic 2: Impeccable Sense Of Rhythm and Timing.

Bing's timing and rhythmic sense were widely acknowledged as the best in the business. Dean Martin came close but others in the Bing school (e.g. Denny Dennis, Michael Holliday, Perry Como, Val Doonican) couldn't match him in this respect.

Characteristic 3: The 'Troubadour' Aspect.

Bing, with his 'ordinary unassuming guy' image, was able to sing love songs with credibility long after he'd passed through the matinée idol stage. This was because he conveyed better than any other singer the 'second-hand' role of the troubadour, the person who sings on behalf of those experiencing the feelings of the song. Long after he ceased to be the 'great romancer', he was still the 'great enhancer'.

Characteristic 4: Professional Persona: The Easy-Going Guy.

Bing's modest relaxed persona made him everyone's ideal father, uncle, brother or friend, depending on perspective. He exuded optimism and made us feel good about ourselves. As such, he was the consummate professional of his time. (We rarely caught a glimmer of who he really was!)

Would it be true therefore to say that we Crosby fans look for the above characteristics in other performers even though their actual styles differ widely? What does that say, if anything, about our own personalities? The 'common bond' may yet exist."

John Walton

Bill Torpey responded saying:

"John Walton, your posting will go a long way toward achieving our goal of determining whether there is a common bond among Crosby fans that influences their favorite singers, other than Bing. Thanks. There certainly has been a wide range of favorites cited. I agree that Bing's characteristics, as you so well detailed, must be considered. I would add only that we might want to look at our own characteristics, as well; specifically, how and why we react to those characteristics. I have the feeling that we react as we do because, simply, we "like" Bing. He was, along with his great voice and abundance of talent, a "nice guy."

I don't know about other Crosby fans, but I find it difficult to enjoy the talent of someone I don't like, or don't respect. I'm fighting the temptation of citing an example. When it comes to Bing's fans, I look at them (us) in the same way that I look at golfers: Just as "anyone who plays golf can't be all bad," as I used to tell one of my daughters who once dated one, I have no doubt that it's true, too, that "anyone who likes Bing can't be all bad."

(Editor: Incidentally, John Walton is also a pretty good singer himself and his latest CD is "Shoes On A Shoestring" issued by Tanta Music, PO Box 798, Lincoln LN3 5WZ (Tel: 0845 324 7590 – website: www.tantamusic.co.uk)

Bing In La Paz, Mexico

Bing had a home in La Paz and whilst there he supported many charities. A journalist based in La Paz wrote to us in April, as follows:

> Dear friend:
> As a journalist, I recently published a work based on the labour of BING CROSBY with the poor children in La Paz (MEXICO). As you know, he lived here for long time and did a lot of social labor helping the poor and in fact, he gave to the local Catholic Church and orphanage. Also, he supported the

biological station of Las Cruces, near La Paz.

Almost all of his work is unknown to the locals, including the authorities. To honor this great singer, I'm looking for the support of all the clubs or BING admirers in the world, to put his name to a street in this city of La Paz.

I have a site on the internet (http://aerocalifornia1.tripod.com/bingcrosby) with a partial look at my work, where I made the proposal to the local city council.

I need your help.

Cuauhtémoc Morgan

(e-mail: cuauhtemocmorgan@yahoo.com.mx)

Well, naturally we emailed our support on behalf of our members and we also asked Mr. Morgan to put his appeal on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum, which he did. The more emails he gets the better so please write to him with your support. It would be nice to have a street named after Bing in La Paz. Kathryn Crosby has been kept informed of this matter.

Eddie Rice

We were sorry to learn of the death of Eddie Rice earlier this year at the age of 91. All of us owe a huge debt to Eddie for his incredible work in rescuing many of Bing's Kraft Music Hall songs for posterity. It's worth telling the story again and here is an article by the late, great, Vernon Wesley Taylor which was originally published over twenty years ago in the *Crosby Voice* magazine issued by the Victorian Bing Crosby Society (now of 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.)

The Rice Tapes

While Edward A. Rice was still a young man he was already an important collector of the works of Bing Crosby. He was in constant communication with other collectors around the world, writing articles for magazines and supplying data for anyone seeking information on the singer. His hobby had given him direction and purpose as good hobbies are inclined to do. Then in a dramatic twist of fate, he lost it all. His collection had to be sold suddenly, for whatever it would bring because his mother faced an unexpected and serious operation. Without a murmur, he made the arrangements for an international auction. When the crisis had passed and his mother was recovering, he began another collection. Using the same drive and energy, he started again from the bottom. The frustration of his loss drove him mercilessly. Every waking spare moment that he could find from his job as a commercial baker was given over to his passion, for now it was more than a hobby. New ideas and the courage to pursue them became commonplace. He scraped acquaintance with showbusiness people, especially those in films and broadcasting. He made himself useful in the proper places until, finally, even Bing himself heard of him and asked him for help in putting his own collection in library-order.

Bing had moved his record collection from his house at Pebble Beach to his Holmby Hills residence and it had arrived there in total confusion. For almost three months Ed spent most of his week ends at the Crosbys, assiduously pouring over thousands of items, cataloguing, making notations, identifying, arranging. Members of the household were openly curious. The children, still very young, often watched, asked questions, ventured opinions. Ed was in very heaven.

It was through John Scott Trotter, Bing's principal music director and orchestra-leader that Rice was invited to help Bing. Sometime before this, a mutual friend had given him Trotter's address and, rather than waste time writing letters, he simply drove to the musician's apartment and knocked at the door. Curious and interested after a few preliminary remarks, he was invited in. Each quickly discovered the other was sincerely devoted to the music of Bing Crosby. In a few minutes, they were chatting like old friends. Their common interest forged immediate and lasting bonds. Rice found Trotter to be a warm and friendly person, still possessed of the refreshing wonder of music; bright, intelligent, quick humored. The relationship which began that day endured until Trotter died.

During one of his visits, Ed casually asked John Scott whether he had ever kept any of the reference recordings of the old Kraft Music Hall and was thrilled to learn that indeed they had been kept, most of them, anyway. In fact, he was told, they were actually beneath their feet. John Scott laughed at Rice's reaction. He took Ed outside and around the building and pointed to a small access-door. In an instant his guest was under the floor. Rice discovered several dusty stacks of records, mostly ten-inch mixed with a few twelve.

Carrying an armload into the apartment, he carefully looked them over. They were white-faced 78's and appeared to have been used very little, though many were without sleeve covers and had particles of sand, here and there, pressed into their surfaces. Their playing-quality, he found, left much to be desired, but perhaps much of that could be repaired by the cleaning and Tender Loving Care of the collector.

John Scott seemed as interested and told Ed of how he had made use of some of them, such as comparing musical passages or checking a number with Bing they planned to repeat. Mostly, they were Bing solos with pieces of dialogue before and after, but they also contained bits of dialogue by the show's cast and the guests, many Kraft product commercials, introductions, and sign-offs. They were not complete shows but, perhaps, all the songs were on them. Think of it!

Ed Rice kept his outward calm. Few collectors had

ever been in such a remarkable position. He had heard tales of others and of how they discovered this fabulous rarity or that unknown rendition but here there were hundreds, hidden beneath a floor. He stared at them as if he were Carter in King Tut's burial chamber, he listened to them. Through his tense thoughts, John Scott's pleasant southern drawl drifted, perhaps no other would ever have such an opportunity. How should he go about it? How should he phrase his question to this genial, rotund man beside him? He took the only way he knew, the simple direct approach.

Bing and John Scott at work on a Kraft show in 1942.

Would it be possible to borrow some of them, maybe several, maybe ALL, for transcribing onto tape? Would John Scott allow this, if every care were taken? Trotter hesitated. These were valuable one-of-a-kind things, never made for public use. These days, he and Bing were into more modern arrangements. Still, they had a value for radio historians, in fact, he was even then considering donating them to a western university who was anxious to use them as study-resource material.

Ed pointed out how there was a golden opportunity here to preserve this once very popular style of orchestral composition. Bing had a vast worldwide legion of followers. With copies of this stuff in their hands, preservation would be assured. It would be listened to, loved appreciated. To such aficionados this was not corn but precious music. Nostalgia was a way of life to the Crosby buff. Trotter demurred. He was a professional to his fingertips and hair ends. Would it be fair to the men and women who had worked on these shows to just give their performances away?

Bing disliked this sort of thing, himself. Wouldn't there be legal snags? It was this very problem that kept most of the entertainers from cooperating with the amateur collectors. Many of them looked down on this sort of thing as a kind of disease and those who had it as pests; out for whatever they could get their hands on. Trotter did not feel this way, but Ed ignored that and ploughed on with the tenacity of the true-born 'Bing-Nut' (though he disliked the term). Hadn't hundreds of other old broadcasts already disappeared without a trace, thanks to such reasoning? Some of these best were lost forever or, just as bad, buried in college libraries, unavailable to any but bored students writing term papers. The ways of such gross losses were many; Spoilage, fire, whole files consigned to the trash-hauler merely to obtain storage-space. And always because it was not 'legal' to give them away. What is wrong with letting a small section of the public own what had been broadcast to the world?

Trotter was silent. Rice persisted. Here was the chance to do the right thing for once something truly worthwhile, if unorthodox. This way, Bing and John Scott would not be forgotten in possibly their best period, their formative radio years. They would not be smothered in the limbo of some musty library or vault. Instead, they would be in hundreds of active, living collections the world over. Every day their music would be heard and would never die.

Besides, didn't Bing, himself, work hard to be remembered? Hadn't he recorded every conceivable kind of song in order to reach every conceivable kind of listener? Wasn't he forever granting interviews and appearing on guest-spots of all kinds, even though he was now in 'semi-retirement'? Most important, didn't Bing promise to make at least one record a year so as not to disappoint his friends, the collectors?

John Scott threw up his hands and laughed. "Alright, alright, Eddie, you win. Take them home, put them on tape. Do what you like. I agree." Rice was overjoyed but only for a moment as John Scott asked a further question.

"What about the money these people would pay? Surely there would be trouble about that?"

Ed assured him that there would be no trouble because there would be no profits. The costs could not be much more than it would take to buy the reels of tape, use of the equipment for making the copies, the wrapping and mailing, the labour . . . Trotter gave up and in moments Rice was back in the crawl space tugging out his treasure.

For the next many months, well into 1963, he was once more giving up his spare time for his hobby, but never before with such enthusiasm. His weekends and evening flew by on the wings of song: Bingsong. Of the approximately 500 most were clear enough to tape, despite the 'pops' and 'clicks'. He also compiled a complete list, detailing all the known data, and sent them out to fellow-collectors everywhere. Soon the reels went on their way into their vital living future. Of course they would be copied endlessly, that was expected. Even the

list became a kind of classic publication, still used among the 'fans'. Over the following years, the songs popped up on 'oldtime' radio broadcasts and records. These, too, are prized 'collectors' items'. The Ed Rice Kraft Music Hall songs would become dearly familiar to thousands, as he had promised.

And they still have value, despite the U.S. government issues of many of the later Kraft broadcasts to the armed forces during World War 2 (and which the collectors found), because they are a long compilation of Bing at his most casual. They are superior in this way to the more formal phonograph records, where Crosby sounds as if he is working harder, trying to achieve more. The Kraft Music Hall producer, Carroll Carroll, once said that Bing sang with only half his voice on the shows. This lends enormous appeal. Here he is still young, full of savoire faire. The world he sang to was growing pregnant with the beat of history yet he so very lightly sang those ten years of Kraft Thursdays they hang on, unforgotten in the mind. Never again was Bing Crosby quite so easy and carefree.

Rice is 70 today and he still voraciously 'collects Bing'. At the moment he is busy working with Broadway Records, putting together a series of long-play records made from his famous list. In the next year or two there is certain to be more.

Sweet indeed are the uses of adversity. Because a young man was forced to sell his prized collection in order that his mother could receive adequate medical care, he was goaded to invade where other mortals could fear to tread and thus all of us are the better for it, and Bing Crosby and John Scott Trotter are able to be heard by happy hobbyists everywhere, on the Fabulous Ed Rice Tapes.

Vernon Wesley Taylor

Celluloid Crosby

Although Bing was turning out two films a year for Paramount during his cinematic heyday, he was only in front of the cameras for a couple of months at a time. But the Paramount Pictures publicity machine never slept. The studio provided press releases, interviews and exclusive tit-bits to the newspapers and magazines so that the names of their contract players were always in the public eye. Performers did not have to make news. The publicity department would do that for them. Ghosted articles were sent out to the dozens of monthly movie magazines that proliferated during Hollywood's golden years. The articles which appeared in fan magazines bearing the by-line of actors of the day were likely to be no more authentic than the signatures on the photographs of film stars that the studios despatched by the thousand in response to the sacks full of fan mail which arrived daily in Hollywood.

Publicity for performers was easier than that for promoting studio projects. Until a film went before the cameras it was a fluid situation as far as who played what. This applied especially when it came to casting. Squibs of two or three lines were sent out like buckshot in the hope that the showbiz editor had a few column inches to fill. It was not expected that the newspaper would do anything other than print what they had been told. Quite often these tit-bits were speculative if not totally fictitious. The readers never seemed to mind these printed factions. Only the avid fans clipped the lines from the newspaper pages and stuck them in scrap books. No one ever bothered to audit the gossip once the item was no longer newsworthy. For this reason, one or two lazy biographers were caught out in later years when they visited newspaper and magazine files and failed to check for accuracy.

This article will examine the early publicity surrounding one of Bing's better films. The film has stood the test of time and stands up well on re-viewing. It is musically superior to a few hastily assembled production line efforts made during the 1930s. It also happened to be one of those rare Hollywood offerings which was enjoyed by the general moviegoer, the fan and the critic. It went before the cameras in the spring of 1941 and the Paramount publicity department whetted appetites that January by revealing that young glamour for the film would be provided by Constance Moore, Lillian Cornell and Virginia Dale. One month later they promised the press that comedian Fuzzy Knight would be a cast member. Also in February, Paramount's head of production, Buddy De Sylva, decided that Bing's brother Bob would feature in the film together with his orchestra. There would certainly be publicity mileage in two Crosby names on the credits. Indeed, why not three Crosbys? So, just when filming was to commence, son Gary was tested for the minor but important role of the young Bing. The studio did admit that the script as written had the Bing character appearing at the film's start aged thirteen and Gary was only eight at the time. A rewrite was envisaged to accommodate Bing's eldest.

Have you guessed the film? If so, it won't be because of the on-screen presence of Moore, Cornell, Dale, Knight or the Crosbys Bob and Gary. It was *Birth of the Blues* and none of the six made it to the starting gate. Lillian Cornell had already appeared with Bing in *Rhythm on the River* (1940) when she sang "What Would Shakespeare Have Said" in a party scene after Bing had earlier demonstrated the song in another room. Her film career failed to take off. Virginia Dale fared better. The following year she got to partner Fred Astaire

in *Holiday Inn* before becoming a regular player in "B" films. Fuzzy Knight rarely set foot in mainstream films. He was too busy providing comic relief in production line westerns. He made over two hundred with sagebrush heroes like Johnny Mack Brown or Tex Ritter. It was *Holiday Inn* which placed Bob Crosby on the Paramount payroll when his orchestra was credited with "special arrangements." Gary's onscreen debut also occurred in the year following the making of *Birth of the Blues*. He was seen briefly in *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942) when he is seen visiting the Paramount studio in the company of his dad. The part of the young Bing in *Birth of the Blues* was taken by Ronnie Cosbey. He didn't bear a strong Crosby resemblance but his name was not too dissimilar.

There was never any doubt that Mary Martin would be Bing's leading lady in the film although there were studio concerns when she revealed that she was pregnant. She waited until filming started before letting it be known. That way it was unlikely she would be replaced. Bing co-operated by letting her scenes be filmed as hastily as possible. The studio's plan was that the film would be released in time for Christmas, 1941 and that was never in question. She also recorded "The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid" with Bing and Jack Teagarden in the May of 1941 but it wasn't until the following March that she committed her duet with Bing of "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie" to wax. That was probably because of the song's popularity in *Birth of the Blues*. The two Crosby solo recordings made to tie-in with the film's release were "Birth of the Blues" and "By the Light of the Silvery Moon".

The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid.

There's a story attached to the latter title which has nothing to do with the film but which is worth relating. The song's UK publisher, Lawrence Wright, recognised that it wasn't just radio plays and film performances that boosted the sale of sheet music. Although royalties from record sales were important, the publisher's main income stemmed from shifting printed copies of song titles. Wright decided that he could boost sales by giving away song title badges with each copy of sheet music. If you didn't want to buy the sheet music you could still have a badge but you had to pay for it. Around 1925 he engaged a manufacturer in Birmingham to produce metal clip pin badges which were then enamelled in vibrant colours. About one hundred differently titled badges were issued with one of the last ones to be issued being "By the Light of the Silvery Moon". The series came to an end because of manufacturing restrictions imposed during World War II. The only other Bing associated badge to be issued was "Auf Wiedersehen, my Dear" which received the Crosby vocal treatment in a couple of early 1930s short films. Nowadays the internet seems to have made everything collectable and Lawrence Wright's song title badges are no exception. The most likely place to find them is in the North West of England. That is because more of them were bought or given out in Blackpool than anywhere else in the country. The music publishers would plug their sixpenny sheet music during holiday wakes weeks. They set up shop on the promenade and the crowds would gather to listen to a free popular music recital. If the pianist in the family liked the tune then the sheet music went home to a Lancashire cotton town for subsequent parlour presentation.

I stated earlier on that *Birth of the Blues* received all round approval. One critic disliked the film's ending montage of bandleaders, preferring a simpler finale, but went on to call it "entertainment plus". Paramount recognised that they had a box-office winner on their hands. Ethical or not they increased their rental terms in the UK. In 1942 they negotiated what was then a maximum 50/50 split between distributor and exhibitor. The other Paramount releases that year that enjoyed higher rentals were *Sullivan's Travels*, *Hatter's Castle* and *Louisiana Purchase*.

And Bing must have been feeling quiet contented. The only showbusiness figure earning more in the film's year of release in the USA was Louis B. Mayer, the head of M-G-M. He earned $704,426 according to figures released by the Securities and Exchange Commission. They gave Bing's Paramount income as £300,000 and his Decca earnings $100,640. Of course, Bing's accountants knew how to advise him. We are talking tip of the iceberg as well as peak of the Paramount mountain.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS Film. This is the film that Bing almost didn't make. Although Sinatra thought Crosby ideal in the role of Allen A. Dale he was going to go with buddy Peter Lawford in that part because Bing had planned to appear in *The Devil's Advocate.* Then two things happened. Sinatra fell out with Lawford and *The Devil's Advocate* was cancelled. Because the part had been tailored to suit Lawford it wasn't possible for Bing to take on the role without a substantial re-write. As originally written, Allen A. Dale was a flashy, well-dressed mouthpiece. The adapted version suited Bing in all respects. The dialogue might have been written by Carroll Carroll from Kraft radio days so well did it match the public's perception of the carefree Crosby.

This casting switch brought about an unexpected delight. Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen were inspired by this character change to write the song "Style". The two other Cahn-Van Heusen songs which Crosby tackled were likewise well suited to his less serious vocal style. Both "Mister Booze" and "Don't be a Do-badder" also nicely advanced the plot of the picture. Sinatra selected "My Kind of Town" for his own use and it received an Academy Award nomination. Sinatra's influence on the film's musical content extended to the conducting of the film's score. The task was assigned to Sinatra's long time collaborator/arranger Nelson Riddle. Another second choice associated with the film was director Gordon Douglas. Gene Kelly was originally selected and a meeting was called to discuss the film's script and the general treatment of the film. Sinatra didn't show at that meeting and the project was passed to Douglas. Knowing Sinatra's impatient, undisciplined behaviour on film sets, it isn't hard to guess why easy-going Douglas was given the assignment. It was so that Sinatra could direct the director. Bing's son Phillip was given one line in the picture in the part of a hood who gives dad a chair and tells him to sit down. Filming took place between October and December of 1963, with breaks in production taking place because of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the kidnapping of Frank Sinatra Jr. It was not until the following April that the film's vocal talents were assembled to record the "soundtrack" album for Reprise Records.

The critics didn't like the film. One reviewer commented: "If Warner Bros. *Robin and the 7 Hoods* had been as amusing an experience for audiences as it patently was for the cast, it would have broken box-office records." It was an opinion shared by Halliwell's Film Guide which summed up the film with: "Too flabby by far to be as funny as it thinks it is, this farrago of cheerful jokes has effective moments and lively routines, but most of them are nearly swamped by flat treatment and the wide screen". Bing's own comments seemed to recognise where the critics were coming from. He said, "I just took the part for a lark. I thought this will be fun working with these guys - we'll have a lot of laughs. It was a good part with some good songs." At the time he must have suspected that not only were the days of Hollywood musicals numbered but his personal contribution to the genre was nearing its end. As it turned out, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* was his musical swansong.

ROBIN, LEO (1900-1984) Lyricist. He was responsible for writing the words to Ralph Rainger's music on several early Crosby hit recordings. Robin and Rainger were contract writers for Paramount Pictures and their relationship with Bing began in 1932 with *The Big Broadcast.* In that one Bing sang "Please" and "Here Lies Love". That former title was used for the 1933 short of the same name when Bing reprised it in order to convince Mary Kornman that he really was that well known radio crooner and then again in the same year as part of a medley in *College Humor.* The following year Robin and Rainger provided another Crosby hit that Jack Benny adopted as his signature tune. That was "Love in Bloom" for the film *She Loves Me Not.* The next year saw the placement of three Robin songs in *Here is My Heart.* "June in January" and "With Every Breath I Take" had music by Rainger whilst Lewis Gensler wrote the tune to "Love is Just Around the Corner". Robin then collaborated with Frederick Hollander on "My Heart and I" and with Richard Whiting on "Sailor Beware" for inclusion in the 1936 version of *Anything Goes.* Those same collaborators were on hand for Bing's next Paramount picture: *Rhythm on the Range.* Hollander provided music for the excised "The House That Jack Built for Jill" and Whiting the melody for "I Can't Escape From You". Come 1937 Bing duetted a couple of Robin and Rainger songs with Shirley Ross for *Waikiki Wedding.* They were "Blue Hawaii" and "Sweet is the Word For You". When the pair won the Academy Award for Best Song in 1938 with "Thanks For The Memory", the time finally arrived when Paramount decided they could entrust Robin and Rainger with a complete score. They assigned them to *Paris Honeymoon* (1939) and R and R provided Bing with a quartet of songs: "I Have Eyes", "You're a Sweet Little Headache", "Funny Old Hills" and "Joobalai". And then the Robin pen was more or less laid to rest for a decade as far as Crosby was concerned.

Bing sang a couple of his earlier Robin-Rainger hits in *Duffy's Tavern* ("Please" and "Love in Bloom") via a phonograph and the pair helped the war effort by writing "Buy, Buy Bonds" for Bing to sing in the short *All Star Bond Rally* (1945). It was only by chance that Robin worked on one more Crosby movie. Bing approached Harry Warren to write the score for the 1952 Paramount film *Just for You.* The plan had been to use Johnny Mercer to write the lyrics but when he proved unavailable, Leo Robin stepped into the breach and provided Bing with half a dozen compositions. They were "I'll Si-si Ya in Bahia", "Call me Tonight", "Zing a Little Zong", "The Live Oak Tree", "On the Ten-Ten from Ten-Ten-Tennessee" and "Just for You". By then Robin had just about written himself out. He continued writing for films until 1955, his best remembered work post-Bing being with Jule Styne for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) and *My Sister Eileen* (1955) which was his last Hollywood assignment.

ROBINSON, EDWARD G. [Emanuel Goldenberg] (1893-1973) Actor. He shared narration chores with Bing for *The Heart of Showbusiness* (1957), made a brief appearance in *Pepe* (1960) and played a pivotal role in Bing's last musical - *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (1964) and yet the two never shared a frame of celluloid together. Robinson had a longer cinematic career than Bing. He was in silents from 1923 and made a memorable Hollywood farewell in *Soylent Green* (1973). There was a final big screen appearance in the same year as *Soylent Green* when he played in the Israeli produced *Neither by Day or Night* but he was always regarded

as a Hollywood leading man. Even when he was under investigation during the communist witchhunts of the early 1950s he was in constant demand as a freelancer. Prior to that he was a mainstay of Warner Bros. gangster movies. He came to the attention of audiences as a toughie when he played Rico Bandello in *Little Caesar* in 1931. The Brothers Warner used him in crime films for the rest of that decade. In the 1940s he extended his repertoire to such an extent that he appeared in an R.A.F. propaganda film, *Journey Together*, in 1945. An expensive divorce settlement in 1956 caused him to sell his valuable art collection and for some time thereafter he was not too fussy about the film roles he took on. He worked in Italy and Spain during the 1960s, all the time generating funds to rebuild his art collection. There were several cameo appearances similar to his *Robin and the 7 Hoods* bit where he was seen briefly as Chicago's top gangster only to be gunned down in the film's opening minutes. The Academy Award ceremony which took place shortly after his death from cancer in 1973 saw him awarded a special Oscar commemorating his five decade contribution to films.

ROBINSON, GEORGE (1890-1958) Director of photography. He was behind the camera for the two films released through Universal that Bing made in 1939 and 1940: *East Side of Heaven* and *If I Had My Way*. That was the studio that offered him regular employment because of the style he brought to that company's horror output. For instance, his assignments before *East Side of Heaven* were *Son of Frankenstein* and *Tower of London* followed in 1943 by *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* and *Son of Dracula*. When you examine his work outside the horror genre you find only long forgotten B pictures.

RODGERS, RICHARD (1902-1979) Composer. He wrote the music and Lorenz Hart or Oscar Hammerstein II provided the lyrics to dozens of popular songs composed in the peak years of American stage musicals. Bing sang just four Rodgers and Hart songs on film. For *The Big Broadcast* (1932) he was heard singing a snatch of "I've Got Five Dollars" and in *Mississippi* (1935) three of his best loved ballads of all time were included: "Soon", "Down by the River" and "It's Easy to Remember". There may very well have been more Rodgers and Hart songs suitable for Bing to tackle if there had not been a falling out between Crosby and Hart. The inclusion, at Bing's request, of the Stephen Foster song "Swanee River" in *Mississippi* did not sit well with Hart. The list of musicals associated with Richard Rodgers reads like the best of the American musical stage 1926 - 1959. It began with "The Girl Friend" with Hart and ended with "The Sound of Music" with Hammerstein. Hollywood picked most of the R & H output and turned them into lavish big screen productions. "Oklahoma!", "Carousel", "South Pacific" and "The King and I" made going to the pictures in the 1950s well worth the while.

ROGERS, ROY [Leonard Slye] (1911-1998) King of the cowboys. He was Leonard Slye, a Son of the Pioneers, when he had an early taste of life on the big screen in *Rhythm on the Range*. In 1938 he became a western star, singing and acting in *Under Western Stars*. And in the 1950s, he again shared a little screen time with Bing in *Son Of Paleface* (1952) and then in *Alias Jesse James* (1959) when they both had guest shots (literally) when they helped Bob Hope in the gun battle finale. By then the Saturday morning movie audience had deserted Roy, his wife Dale Evans and his faithful horse Trigger for Saturday morning television featuring Roy, Dale and Trigger in the "Roy Rogers Show" which ran for five years. During the 1940s Rogers was turning out a sixty minute western every two or three months but he would never have made it beyond the 1950s because he was too much of an on-screen good guy. As for his singing, he managed a very passable duet with Bing on "San Fernando Valley" on the Kraft Music Hall broadcast of June 29th, 1944. That performance was only surpassed by his yodelling of "Square Dance" on the same show. It leaves you breathless just listening to it.

ROSE, JACK (1911-1995) Screenwriter-producer. Rose started as a writer for Bob Hope's radio show and that relationship introduced him to motion pictures beginning with *My Favourite Brunette* (1947) in which Bing had made a gag appearance and continued with *Road to Rio* the following year. In both of those he shared writer credit with Edmund Beloin. His other credit on a Crosby film came in 1950 when he wrote *Riding High* alongside Robert Riskin and Melville Shavelson. Most of his subsequent work was with Shavelson. Rose wore his producer hat for a couple of Hope films from the 1950s - *The Seven Little Foys* (1955) and *Beau James* (1957). His film career came to an end in the early 1980s following his involvement in several comedy hits including *A Touch of Class* (1973), *Lost and Found* (1979) and *The Great Muppet Caper* (1981).

ROSE, VINCENT (1880-1944) Bandleader and composer. In the 1932 film *Billboard Girl* Bing sings "Were You Sincere" in a garden setting. The composers were Vincent Rose and Jack Meskill. Rose ran an orchestra for twenty years but found to time to compose several songs that found their way into the standard repertoire of balladeers forever after, such as "Whispering" (co-written with John Schonberger) and "Blueberry Hill".

Shirley Ross and Bing in Waikiki Wedding.

ROSS, SHIRLEY [Bernice Gaunt] (1913-1975) Actress and singer. She did both in two of Bing's Paramount pictures from the late 1930s. In *Waikiki Wedding* (1937) she was Georgia Smith, Bing's leading lady. In *Paris Honeymoon* (1939) things were not quite so cut and dried when she played Barbara Wayne and had to share Bing with Franciska Gaal. Her voice blended well with Bing's for their on-screen duets in both films, standout performances being "Blue Hawaii" in *Waikiki Wedding* and "I Have Eyes" in *Paris Honeymoon.* Better remembered duets from that era come from a couple of films she made with Bob Hope. She sang "Thanks for the Memory" in *The Big Broadcast of 1938* (1938) and "Two Sleepy People" in *Thanks for the Memory* (1938), a confusion of titles which only Hollywood could perpetrate in order to cash in. Shirley Ross was initially a pianist and band singer and she allowed her Hollywood career to peter out, retiring from the silver screen with *A Song for Miss Julie* (1945).

ROUND-UP LULLABY Song. Bing sings this Gertrude Ross-Badger Clark song to Cuddles the bull in a box-car setting in *Rhythm on the Range* (1936). He puts the same feeling into his vocal as he would if serenading his ladylove.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: Our member Alan Matheson, based in Vancouver, Canada, is a very talented musician and last winter, at the age of 46, he decided to get a bit more "schooling" and he took a film scoring class at the University of British Columbia. One assignment he was given was to write about the use of underscore, source music and other details for a film of his choice. He chose 'Little Boy Lost' and after you have read his treatise, you will see the film in a new light. Read on!)

FILM SCORING *LITTLE BOY LOST*

This film, which stars Bing Crosby as journalist Bill Wainwright, represented a real departure for Crosby as it was not a musical but a dramatic film (based on a story by Marghanita Laski and adapted by director George Seaton) with incidental songs sung by Crosby and his co-star Nicole Maurey. It was Crosby's first real dramatic part and foreshadowed his later roles in *The Country Girl* (1954) and the 1966 remake of *Stagecoach.*

The film was scored by long-time Crosby associate Victor Young and included three songs (which are used in various ways to advance the plot) written by Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen: "A Propos De Rien", "Cela M'est Egal", and "The Magic Window". There was one additional song used in the movie ("Mon Coeur Est Un Violon" written by Miarka Lapacerie and sung by Nicole Maurey's character, Lisa). These songs are all employed as underscore *and* source music with Victor Young making interesting use of elements from each, coupled with his own musical ideas.

Young uses what was then the standard large studio orchestra with full string and woodwind sections and makes only intermittent use of the saxophone and brass sections (usually just trench horns).

Set in 1948, *Little Boy Lost* opens with dramatic music underneath the main - titles, creating an atmosphere of foreboding that will reoccur throughout most of the film. After a few seconds, this leads to an arrangement of "The Magic Window" (still under the titles), a song that doesn't show up until well into the movie. This was likely meant to be the "plug" song for the film and is Crosby's only ballad in the picture. This music continues but changes character rapidly for the opening scene (aboard an airplane) which has Crosby en route to Paris to see if his long-lost son, Jean, has been found. (Crosby's character, Bill Wainwright, is a war correspondent who is separated from his wife, Lisa - played by Nicole Maurey - and infant son by the fall of France in 1940. As a member of the Resistance, Lisa has been executed by the Gestapo, but Crosby's character, Bill, is following up on a rumour that his son has survived in an orphanage).

'Bill' and 'Lisa' combine on "Darktown Strutter's Ball"

Narration by Crosby's character sets up the plot line and this is accompanied, at first, by a brooding minor-key theme. As he recalls how he met his wife, a new romantic theme is introduced and this leads seamlessly to a (pre-war) flash-back scene at a Parisian radio-station. This is turn (under dialogue the whole time) sets up Nicole Maurey's song "Mon Coeur Est Un Violon"

which she is broadcasting in a studio adjacent to where Bill is filing a news report. This transition is handled very well, with no obvious word cues (as in a standard musical of the period). The song is, of course, simply part of the story and provides a context for Bill and Lisa to meet.

The next music cue is source music for a party attended by Bill and Lisa. No original music is used here, just a version of "Darktown Strutter's Ball" (sung by Crosby in French and Maurey in English!) accompanied by a small Dixieland-style combo. The next section of underscore is used for scenes of pre-war Paris; some of the music "reflective" and reminiscent of the opening scene on the airplane while other cues (during a fairground scene) are light and buoyant. This music (as Bill recounts the early days of his marriage to Lisa and the birth of their son, Jean) gives way to the song "A Propos De Rien" sung by Lisa to her son. As soon as the song is completed a "foreshadowing" transition cue appears to set up Bill's narration about the coming of the war which is also accompanied by newsreel footage of the fall of France. The war footage is underscored by far more dramatic music which gradually loses its tension as the setting changes to Bill's time in London where he has been separated from his family in Paris. There is a clever transition from the underscore (and narration) to source music via a radio in Bill's room. Lisa is reprising "Mon Coeur..." on Radio France and is also passing along information to the French Resistance via the seemingly innocuous lyrics (a phenomenon that actually did take place during the years of occupation). The modulation from the brooding underscore to the source music is very well handled with no obvious intro or preamble.

The narration takes us from 1940 (the fall of France) to 1944 (the events following "D-Day" including Lisa's murder) and there is a new music cue for this section. This combines Bill's memories of returning to France in 1944 along with his "present" (1948) arrival in Paris to search for his son. At the end of this brooding music cue, there is a nice use of "special effects" with the noise of the 'plane's propellers sounding, at first, like a distant tympani roll.

After Bill arrives in Paris, he learns that his son might be one of the children at an orphanage in Montfort. His arrival at the Montfort train station is accompanied by a new cue which aptly portrays his anxiety as he has no idea if the child he is going to see is in fact his son. This cue is extended as he walks to the orphanage - Victor Young making great use of developing motives from previous elements of the underscore.

After a scene at the orphanage (where the only music cue is the students singing "Oh, Susanna"), Bill and a child named Jean set off for a walk. The walking scene is underscored with only a few lines of "interior dialogue" from Bill. This music is by turns unsettled, sad and faintly optimistic (for the most part played by the strings only). As Bill tries to ascertain whether this Jean is his son (and is gradually warming to him) there is a sense of "uplift" provided by the addition of trench horns to the "unsettled" music cue. Part of this change in mood is due to young Jean's remark "...such a waste...", an expression favoured by Bill's late wife. This underscore section leads to a song cue for Bing, "Cela M'est Egal" which is beautifully set up. In comparing "idiomatic" expressions with Jean in French and English, (and recalling the nonsense songs Lisa used to sing to her baby) Bing scats two bars of melody - acappella - that leads to the song proper. His voice never rises above the conversational, while the orchestration behind the vocal is "dropped in" very discreetly. The presentation of the song (the two characters are simply sitting on a train station bench) is believable as there is no attempt to "stage" the tune or add any unnecessary artifice.

As Bill and Jean head to Paris by train (in an attempt to see if Jean recalls anything of his former surroundings), Young introduces a bi-part underscore consisting of elements of "Cela M'est Egal" (played romantically by the strings) and an allegro cue for flute, clarinet, harp, celeste and pizzicato strings that, to me, relates to the journey as well as the anticipation and uncertainty latent in the scene.

'Bill' and 'Jean' arrive in Paris.

The "train" underscore ends with three powerful and foreboding chords upon their arrival in Paris. This is followed by tracking shots of daytime Paris with "kinetic" music cues for Bill and Jean's car ride that have overtones of Gershwin's "An American In Paris" as well as elements (melodically, in the strings along with use of "stopped" horns) from "The Princesses' Game-Scherzo" from Stravinsky's "The Firebird" (all this happening in a matter of seconds).

In a scene set in one of Bill's old apartments, there follows four source music cues, all presented acappella, as Bill attempts to jog Jean's memory ("A Propos...", "Sur La Pont d'Avignon", "Frere Jacques", and a reprise of "A Propos..."). When these fail to produce a result, there is a dramatic music cue as Bill throws his pipe across the room in frustration ("posted", in fact) after Jean leaves the room. Later, when Bill sits at Jean's bedside, "Cela M'est Egal" is brought back in a new orchestration which is given a minor-key tag as the camera follows Bill to the living room where he sits alone. This shot, with Bill looking out into the night, has a "stern" somewhat final ending as though he has accepted his worst fear - that this "Jean" is not his son.

The next scene (also the next day) finds Bill, Jean and Bill's friend Pierre visiting Mme. Quillebouef, a launderess who sheltered Jean and other orphans during the occupation. Bill recognizes the perfume on a handkerchief as being identical to Lisa's favourite scent and Young immediately introduces a new cue using high-register string tremolos. The effect and actual note choices are very similar to that of the opening bars of Sibelius' "The Swan Of Tuonela" just after the initial english-horn solo. (Significantly, the "Swan of Tuonela" is the symbol of death in Finnish folklore).

Regardless of Young's possible subtextual intentions, the cue has an amazing balance of uncertainty, longing and hopefulness. Again, this cue only lasts a few seconds but makes its point most effectively. Bill, at the suggestion of the orphanage's Mother Superior and his friend Pierre, is looking for any possible sight, smell or sound to remind Jean of his earliest days.

There follows a scene with Jean, Bill and Pierre at a Parfumerie where Bill appears to revive Jean's buried memories of his mother. A new cue (different from the one mentioned above) appears underneath Jean's seeming remembrance of the perfume which is used to anticipate and bridge the abrupt scene change to the Paris zoo. The "zoo" music is naturally upbeat and harkens back to the earlier scene of Bill and Lisa having fun in similar surroundings (the fairground). This music is also related in terms of orchestration to the allegro "train" music used earlier. As Bill and Jean share a boat ride in the amusement park, we arrive at the only "movie-musical" moment. After Bill tells Jean of the joys of reading and the power of the imagination (via references to Stevenson's "Treasure Island" among other books) he sings the final Burke/Van Heusen song, "The Magic Window".

The transition from the underscore to this tune is once again, subtle and seamless - a great testimony to Young's skill as a *composer* and *orchestrator*. The song itself is beautifully arranged (as was much of Young's work for Bing during their associations. 1932-54) with most of the musical activity taking place above or below Crosby's voice to allow him the maximum of rhythmic flexibility. Lyrically, this song, with its concern with the imagination and the images it can produce, has an direct relationship to the undertone of uncertainty and promise contained within this (and previous) scenes. The last "A" section of the song is extended instrumentally as underscore for dialogue at the close of the scene.

Bill and Jean's next scene takes place in the last apartment that Bill, Lisa and Jean occupied before they were separated. Jean gazes from an upper window at a bicycle shop that he claims to remember. Bill doesn't recall the shop and a music cue portraying his uncertainly, and now strong doubt, builds by making use of strettos and adding polyphonic lines. The musical tension is increased as Bill ascertains the bike shop's recent establishment and as Bill walks through Paris to Mme. Quillepboeuf's.

There he receives her explanation that she had no idea as to the child's real identity but cared about him so much that she "coached" Jean to "remember anything that Monsieur might suggest".

The underscore resumes its intensity as Bill leaves her and the music becomes especially emphatic during a shot of Bill ascending a staircase as he heads back to his old apartment to possibly confront Jean. There is a slight relaxation in this intensity when he does return to the apartment - perhaps to signify Bill's putting on a brave face and to reflect his essentially caring feelings toward Jean.

'Bill' and 'Nelly' at the shooting gallery.

Bill returns Jean to the orphanage in the next scene and during a painful interview between Bill and the Mother Superior, a minor-key cue from the beginning of the film is reused. After a fruitless discussion where the Mother Superior unsuccessfully attempts to convince Bill to adopt Jean, she shouts "get out!" frustrated at his intransigence and self-pity. This word cue brings back

the minor-key motive ("posted") which segues directly to the "fairground" melody, which provides a musical flashback but also lines up with Bill's walk from the orphanage which take him past the local fairground and a travelling circus.

Later, Bill is seated at a cafe, where the quasi-"Swan of Tuonela" theme reappears mixed with the minor key idea mentioned above. A local woman, Nelly, (from Bill's hotel in Montfort) attempts to cheer him up and the "fairground" cue is reintroduced. Bill and Nelly return together to the fairground where Bill wins a stuffed dog at the shooting gallery. This dog is exactly like one from a much earlier scene with Bill and Lisa (who names the toy "Binky") and interestingly the stern dramatic music from Bill's "staircase" scene is reused.

'Bill' with the Mother Superior

Later as Bill writes a letter to the Mother Superior that will accompany the stuffed dog that he plans to send to Jean, Pierre reappears to make Bill face that fact that Lisa is dead and Bill's life must continue, the implication being that Bill should adopt Jean in spite of any doubts that exist (up to this scene, Bill has made a point of not wanting to read the report of his wife's interrogation and death). A short melodic motive that forms the basis for many of the haunting melodies in the underscore is used again.

As Pierre says "rest in peace" (referring to Lisa), Young begins a new cue that underscores Bill's arrival at the train station and the start of his solitary journey back to Paris. On top of this cue, Young uses fragments of "Cela M'est Egal" played by a solo harp. The sound of the train's whistle jogs a memory of a nightmare that Lisa has earlier about an abandoned child (dramatized in an earlier scene) and this causes Bill to leave the station for the orphanage where he finds Jean unwrapping the stuffed dog and recognizing and naming (without prompting) the long lost toy from his past. As Bill and Jean are reunited as father and son, Young uses an instrumental arrangement of "The Magic Window" to conclude the scene, through the fade-out.

Victor Young's score for *Little Boy Lost* is extremely effective and never overstated. Thematically, this film is in the line of "realistic dramas" that appeared towards the end of the Second World War and after (such as *Lost Weekend* and *The Best Years Of Our Lives*) and this score is certainly equivalent in terms of quality and dramatic intent. All the dramatic cues work very well and Young creates constantly changing versions of his own musical motifs as well as imaginatively re-working the Burke/Van Heusen songs. Given that this was not a musical and yet starred Bing Crosby, this must have been a challenging assignment in many ways. Young, however, had previously supplied the "underscore" for four unusual Crosby recordings: "Ballad For Americans" (1940), "The Happy Prince" (1945 with Orson Welles) "The Small One" and "The Man Without A Country" (both 1947) which were all dramatic readings, without songs in the last three cases. This must have given Young some very solid ideas as to how to "accompany" the narration that Crosby provides as "Bill Wainwright". It is this latter concept that I had the most trouble with.

While the narration provides the "backstory" of Wainwright's journey to France, it removes a bit too much responsibility from the director to "tell the story" via the character's action and dialogue. It's hard to know if this was an experiment or an expedient measure on the director/screenwriter's part. As far as the soundtrack goes, there is nothing expeditious there. The source music, as noted, is effective and not "pasted on" (as is the case in a lot of musicals) and the Burke/Van Heusen songs are very neatly dovetailed from the underscore (the songs never appear from "silence" in terms of the music track). The melodic strength of Victor Young's work is not surprising given that he had already written such "standards" as: "Sweet Sue, Just You", "Stella By Starlight" and "Beautiful Love". Placing Bing Crosby in a "non-musical" must have seems like a risk to all concerned, including Crosby himself but this idea was revisited soon after for *The Country Girl* (released in 1954). Crosby was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance in that film and, once again, Victor Young provided the musical score.

Alan Matheson

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, UK

BING 142 achieved your usual high standard. For me, the standout article was Martin McQuade's interview with Bill Harbach. Martin knows the questions to ask on behalf of Crosby fans. He was adept at prompting Bill when it came to reviving memories of forty years ago. I've mentioned before that Bing's television years are not as well covered and documented as his recording, radio and film work. An insight into what went on during Bing's post "C.K. Dexter Haven" years is always welcome.

You asked for feedback on *The Road to the Fountain of Youth* project. It's hard to believe that Mel Shavelson was responsible for the outline found in Bob Hope's possession. Crosby and Hope could only come over as two dirty old men. They just about got away with things for *The Road to Hong Kong*. That was partly because that film came eight years after *Bali* and they still had the following of a filmgoing audience. The *Fountain of Youth* project would probably have been completed nearly twenty years after *Hong Kong*. By then the typical audience would have been predominantly youthful. The new Road film would have been as out of place on the big screen as Bob Hope's last few cinematic outings.

There was speculation that *Fountain of Youth* would make its debut on television. Knowing the way in which the major networks in the USA operated in those days the Shavelson outline would have required major revisions. That could only have been an improvement. By the way, I've not found it easy to go to sleep at night imagining a 65-year-old Dorothy Lamour being transformed by the fountain of youth so that Bing and Bob could vie for her attention. Nor would Joan Collins have been able to salvage matters by the late 1970s.

Alan Matheson, Vancouver, Canada.

I just finished the new issue of BING and it was just great. The article on Bill Harbach was terrific and really illuminating. I'm sure that this has been suggested but a "Bing-only" DVD compendium of the Hollywood Palace shows would be a wonderful thing to see. I do have a couple of "HP" shows via Festival Films and Bing's contributions as host, comedian and singer are always superb. Better and less dated than some of his guest stars.

The précis of the unfilmed *Road to the Fountain of Youth* was very interesting and I have to agree that it was better that it wasn't completed - at least not in the form printed in the magazine. Overall, many elements of the outline of the script reminded me (unfortunately) of the kind of scripts handed to Laurel and Hardy in their 20th Century Fox period. Ultimately, the characterizations of both Laurel and Hardy during that period (1942-45) and Bing and Bob in the Shavelson script seemed unsympathetic and bordering on caricature - all the politically incorrect elements in the "Road to the Fountain of Youth" outline aside!

Still, it would have been great to have had Bing in one more movie, especially since he had entered a very strong phase vocally at the time of his death.

Ken Brown, Pinner, Middlesex, UK

First of all, let me congratulate you and everyone else involved in producing the current issue of BING magazine. It made excellent reading as ever. I love the back cover – what a marvellous idea to make a collage of the BING'S HOLLYWOOD covers!

I was particularly delighted to read the article entitled BING ON THE UNDERGROUND, in which I learnt that Bing's name has been assigned to my local station, namely Pinner, in the musical interpretation of the London Underground map. This is a great honour for Pinner indeed, and I shall be humming Bing's music each time I visit the station from now on.

Pat Shields, Studio City, California, USA

Issue 142 was thoroughly entertaining as usual. Martin McQuade's article about the Hollywood Palace was terrific. Re *Road To The Fountain Of Youth*, I think it's a blessing it never got made. Judging by the awful movies Hope made in the 60's and early 70's, he no longer knew the value of a good script. Plus....had they remade their very best Road movie as old men, how funny would that have been? Probably nothing at all like the original. Young men in those situations are infinitely more believable than old men. I think Bing understood that, even though Hope clearly did not. It's too bad they didn't do a "Grumpy Old Men" movie before Matthau and Lemmon... though I wonder if they could have done it any better.

On page 40, the letter from Jon Oye was thought provoking. I agree that one needs to recognize one's limitations but I'm not sure his Mick Jagger comparison is a good one. Speaking for myself, if Bing could have stopped the clock as impressively as Mick, it would have been a joy to behold. Instead, he was doing those dreadful orange-juice commercials that completely overshadowed his real identity with the younger generation.

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

When I find a large envelope from our ICC Representative David Currington in my letter box I can guess what it contains. I feel like a child who's received a box of chocolates for a birthday present—I want to 'consume' it immediately but I want the pleasure to last. So it was with BING No. 142. At last, I've finished reading and re-reading it and, like some of your correspondents, I thank all concerned for their efforts in producing another excellent issue. Of the vast amount of interesting material, I'll just make a few comments.

The article on 'the Crosby' reminded me of Nathaniel's golfing prowess. His victory in the 1981 US Amateur Championship received attention in the Australian press. How many would know that he came to Australia to compete in the Australian Open Golf Championship a few years later? (I believe it was in our summer of 1986.)

Martin McQuade's article on William Harbach was indeed fascinating. My research, aided by reference to *The Chronological Bing Crosby On Television*, indicates that Australians saw many of his shows on their TV screens. At least four of Bing's Oldsmobile series, including William Harbach's first, were telecast in Australia. Oldsmobiles were virtually unavailable in Australia at the time so the titles were changed; two were even re-titled *Ford Startime*. Many of The *Hollywood Palace* shows were seen on our screens from early 1968 until 1971 (most which included Bing were Harbach productions) but as colour TV did not come to Australia until 1975 they were black-and-white transmissions here. The *Bing Crosby Special* of 23 October 1968 was shown here in 1969 and *Bing and Carol—Together again for the first time* was aired in 1970 and 1971.

Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosbys are always a good read. Fancy *The Bells of St. Mary's* outgrossing *Going My Way*. I don't think that happened in Australia. At least in Melbourne and Sydney's CBD cinemas, when I compared the first runs of each film and took account of the seating capacities of the cinemas. *Going My Way* did twice as well. Incidentally, I believe that A. Emmett Adams who composed of 'The Bells of St Mary's' was born in Australia.

The story on *The Road to the Fountain of Youth* caught my attention and I must admit I had second thoughts about ploughing through it. I'm pleased that I did read it. It was very much from the mould of the other Road films, I thought, and I reckon I would have enjoyed the nonsensical fantasy. I could picture each scene. How different from today's fantasy films.

I'll conclude my reflections on BING with a note on Phil Harris. He was one of the first performers who had a professional connection with Bing Crosby to perform in this country. In 1927 Phil was one of seyeral US musicians who played in Carroll Lofner's Palm Grove Orchestra band at a dance hall in Melbourne. As your *Bing Crosby - Day by Day* notes, Lofner's Orchestra backed Bing on some Woodbury Soap programs.

I've now written the last word in the final chapter (No. 35) of my own book - *Remembering Bing. Bing Crosby and Australian Entertainment* - and the big challenge continues to be to convince a publisher to take it on.

On the subject of books, I've borrowed a book which has many references to Bing from our local library. It's *Sinatra* by Richard Havers, published in 2004 in UK by Dorling Kindersley. Perhaps you've seen it. It focusses on his career rather than his personal extravagances although they are mentioned, inevitably, as they affected his career. It's beautifully illustrated and includes a small copy of an ad for Loew's Jersey City Theatre when Sinatra saw Bing was singing there, in 1933. It seems to be well researched although, inexplicably, on page 238 Havers says that Bing had a hit with 'High Hopes' from *High Society* in 1956. Well, I suppose I'll have done well if my book has only one such blooper.

Joe Klein, New York, USA

Thank you very much for enrolling me in the Club. I received the Spring 2006 issue of BING, and enjoyed it thoroughly.

I was first delighted to read the article on page 12 about Kathryn's cabaret tribute to Bing. I brought a student, Max Bulinski, to introduce him to the legacy and to say hello to Kathryn and Mary Frances; Max is an aspiring young singer actor and was thrilled to be at the performance. Then, as I read on in the article, I realized that my name had been misspelled. (I am of course presuming that the Joseph Stein referred to in the article is supposed to be me). Klein, not Stein. And I was not rehearsal pianist for the Hollywood Palace, I was a kind of personal coach; Bing asked me to help prepare the family for that Christmas Special. I conducted *Peter Pan* for Kathryn for her theatrical debut, which involved many hours rehearsing at their home. It was in their home that I actually played 'White Christmas' for Bing, to find the correct key for a new recording being done. I have never recovered from that thrill.

Keep me posted of events in New York City, I'm very happy to be part of the Crosby "family".

(Editor: Our apologies to Joe for the incorrect description of him. What a thrill to be playing for Bing as he sang 'White Christmas' in his home! It can't get much better than that.)

Peggy Doyle, Oak Lawn, Illinois, USA

My former name was Plaga and I was President of the Bing Crosby Fan Club back in Jackson, Michigan during the years 1952 to 1955, the latter being the year I was married. I worked with Larry Crosby on the club. He sent me many articles on Bing and when Bing made the big 25th Anniversary Album Larry sent one to me

which I still have. Unfortunately all of the Fan Club News letters I typed up and sent out as Bing's Fan Club News were destroyed in a flood.

A friend of mine who also loved Der Bingle was Johnny Elwood who hosted a radio show every Saturday afternoon called *Crosby Cavalcade*. I did the 15 minute show when Johnny went out of town. It was lots of fun.

Maria Elizabeth Babcock, Yakima, Washington, USA

For a long time I have wanted to write and say how much I love the BING magazine. You may be surprised to know that I am a young fan of Bing Crosby, but then again, maybe not since Bing is so great that I wouldn't be surprised to know there are many young people out there who love his music as much as I do. I am 26 yrs old and I joined the club when I was around 14-15, so I have been a member for about 12 years... with no desire to ever quit! The only reason I probably have not been a member even longer than that is because I did not know of the existence of the club before then, but once I found out I joined right away!

I have been a fan of Bing for as long as I can remember. I have loved Bing from a very early age. I loved to watch his movies and hear his beautiful singing. As a kid I would memorize his songs, dance to them, and when I was five years old he inspired me to learn to whistle! Bing was an amazing whistler wasn't he? I would even know it was Bing Crosby who was doing the narration and voices for the animated Disney film *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* which we watched as a tradition every year on Halloween. *Going My Way, The Bells of St. Mary's, White Christmas, Holiday Inn* were seen every year too and *High Society* was my favorite.

My parents never really worked on making me like any particular thing with music or movies but they exposed me to great people like Bing and even as a child I could recognize Bing's amazing talent. now have children of my own and even they are enjoying Bing and picking out songs they like by him. I have four children, 4yrs old and under and the older 3 have already decided that they really like the song "I'm an Old Cowhand" which they try to sing along to. Seems like there's little Crosby fans in the making.

Bing's songs and movies have meant a lot to me over the years and I still enjoy them all today. I am trying to slowly expand my collection of CDs and hope to someday have a big collection of all his music.

Thank you for such a wonderful magazine where I can continue to learn and read about Bing and all the wonderful contributions he made to music and film. Being young, I feel I missed out on such a wonderful time when Bing was in his prime, so it is great to have a magazine that is all about Bing so that someone young like me can experience Bing in the present day. All the articles are really interesting and the magazine is also very beautiful with its glossy pages and wonderful pictures. It makes not only a great informative and enjoyable magazine but a lovely, quality collectible as well. I have saved every issue. You all have definitely done a great job in the production of the issues!

Henry Sipila, Long Island, New York, USA

I thought you might be interested in my licence plates in N. Y. State. Just a little bit of promo can't hurt.

(Editor: Wonderful! Well done, Henry. As you say, it all helps to keep Bing's name alive.)

Bob Grace, Houston, USA

I just received my Spring 2006 issue of Bing and read your editorial regarding the difficulty in hearing Bing on the radio these days (other than Christmas time). I concur with your frustration. I live in Houston — the 4th largest city in the U.S. — which has approximately 40 radio stations and none of them play Bing (or any performer from that era). The last station with a format that would occasionally play a record by Bing or Glenn Miller or Sinatra, etc. changed its format a couple of years ago. Now it's current pop, talk radio or sports.

But the purpose of this e-mail is to report there's good news out there — satellite radio. I've recently begun receiving satellite radio broadcasts from XM Radio, and among their 100-plus stations is one called "The Forties." It airs the pop hits of both the 30s and the 40s and – what do you know – there are lots of Bing songs on this station. Although I wasn't born until the '50s, I thought I was pretty familiar with the music from the 30-40s era. But XM has a very broad playlist and I'm constantly hearing songs by bands/singers (other than Bing) that I had not heard before.

(Editor: On our recent trip through the mid-west of the USA, my wife and I were tuned into "The Forties" channel for much of the time and I can only echo Bob's comments. Wonderful entertainment.)

Lorne Harasen, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Just wanted to say that I was sorry to read in BING magazine of the passing of Alan Fisher. His name is one of happy memory for me. Over the years of my Christmas interviews with the great man, Alan Fisher was a very important part. He was an important part because most of my calls to the Crosby residence at Hillsborough were answered by the butler in that house

and he was Mr. Fisher. Kathryn answered the telephone on occasion but most of the time it was a warm, male voice, with an English accent. The Crosby butler was pleasant, welcoming and helpful.

I remember on one occasion he asked me to hold for a moment and then returned to tell me that: "He has done something he never does. He has driven Harry to school!" I took Mr. Fisher's advice and called back about 20 minutes later to find the dutiful father had returned from what can only be described as a parental signal of what is important for dependents/children who range from age 5 to 18 in most North American locations.

On another occasion butler Fisher advised me that the man of many "Roads" was on the road "walking the dogs!" As a former President of the Regina Kennel and Obedience Club I was immediately curious about the breed of dogs. (Our oldest son and his wife are Veterinarians. They have all the books of the Yorkshire Vet). A matter of minutes later, one of North America's most avid outdoorsmen (Hunter Bing) informed me that his breed of choice was a wonderful Canadian sporting dog, the Labrador Retriever. When I asked Bing how many he had, he had to pause and reflect for a moment as he sorted out, among two or three others, his "old hunting dog, Kathryn's dog" and a lone chocolate colored Lab (we call them Labs in Canada) that Bing couldn't figure how he got into the group. He said he chose Labs because they worked well in the field, were eager to their please their master and made good house pets. How true. Their stature and smooth (short) coats, strength in the water and in the field, their even temperament and intelligence and ability to adapt to almost any environment (Labrador is tough country) made them the perfect dog for a man who could be found hunting in almost every week of the year. Just check page 16 in Kathryn's book "My Last Years with Bing" and feast your eyes on Remus and friend at Rising River and note the conformation of that gorgeous dog. It is to die for!

Remus and friend.

Appreciated the note about CKRM in this latest issue. I will have to write you a note about this station. There is no station in this province that plays Bing at this time. Christmas is somewhat of an exception but that is quite limited.

David Currington, Turramurra, NSW, Australia

. . . A snippet of information I've learned about Bing is via the autobiography of Judith Durham, female lead singer of The Seekers. "Colours of My Life: the Judith Durham Story" complied by Graham Simpson and released by Random House in 1994. At page 142, Judith says that The Seekers were approached to appear in a Bing Crosby movie to be shot in Switzerland in 1968! The title of the movie was to be *The Great St. Bernard.* The Seekers agreed to appear, but as we know, nothing came of the proposal. So that's another "movie that might have been" for the list.

(Editor: I vaguely recall talk about a film of that name being considered in the 1960s but the proposed star was Perry Como. However, Fred Reynolds also mentions the proposal in his book 'Road To Hollywood' so it must have some credence.)

The Summer of '76 – Never A Time Like It!

Ken Crossland looks back 30 years

We didn't know it but global warming was invented in 1976. Of course, in those days, life was much simpler and no-one knew that we were starting to frazzle the planet. We just thought it was hot. And it was hot. Very hot, at least for England. The grass turned brown, the reservoirs dried up, and day after day, the sun kept on shining. Bing's new album had a track that summed it up. "We're having a heat wave, a tropical heat wave ...."

Ordinarily, the last place you go in a London heat wave is to one of the old, cramped theatres that seem to have only recently discovered electricity, leave alone air conditioning. US readers might assume that the London Palladium is a vast entertainment complex, light, airy and spacious. Think again. It's old and claustrophobic, a product of Edwardian England that was shoe-horned into an old circus site, just south of London's Oxford Street. It's not the kind of place where you would expect to find a septuagenarian performing in temperatures approaching 100 degrees. But that's what happened in the summer of '76.

It was indeed no ordinary time. As Reg Bristo said in the June issue of "BING", "there NEVER was a time like it". In fact he said it twice, and you sensed that he was pinching himself as he typed the words. Was it really true? Bing, on stage at the London Palladium, fourteen shows ..... Those of us who had been fortunate enough to be at the taping of the BBC's "Parkinson" show the previous year knew that Bing had rediscovered

the joy of singing, but equally, we had become accustomed to Bing being a reluctant performer. It was only three years since the previous "Parkinson" show where Bing had, under some duress, come up with a half chorus of "White Christmas" and that had been it. Yes, the new albums with Ken Barnes were marvellous, but a live concert? It was hard to believe.

The news of Bing's two-week season had broken gradually. First there were the rumours in the press about Bing wanting to put on a concert "for his British fans". The Royal Festival Hall was mooted, then the Albert Hall. One show, a one-off, something similar to the one-nighters that we knew Bing had done in California earlier that year, seemed to be what was implied. The idea that one show could satisfy all of Bing's fans was of course pure fantasy but soon there was talk of a London season. Finally, it was official. Bing would appear for two weeks at the London Palladium in June 1976.

At Bing's insistence, preference was given to ICC members in the allocation of tickets. These were days of course when you wrote a letter to the Palladium box office, marked ICC on the envelope and politely enclosed a stamped envelope for the reply. No Ticketmaster call centres, booking fees, administration charges and the associated trimmings that adorn the big ticket rip-off world of today. You sat and waited to see if you were lucky.

1976 was of course in the last century. News travelled more slowly then, and sometimes not at all. There were no personal computers, no internet, no video streaming. There were no satellite channels with their seemingly endless news feeds. You knew what you read in the papers and that was it. There had been no reports of Bing's shows in the USA and when we took our seats in the Palladium in June, no-one knew quite what to expect. The expectation was that Bing would come on last, as was the norm at that time and if we had got an hour of him on stage, most of us would have been well satisfied.

At 7.30, the curtains opened and there was a screen in the middle of the stage. The film was a flickering, black and white newsreel from wartime. It was Bing on his last public performing visit to London in 1944 at the Stage Door Canteen. Sans toupee, we saw him singing "San Fernando Valley" to US forces who were stationed in Britain. For the 1976 audience, it was a curious opening and they responded with polite applause. The film ended and the screen was whisked away. Pete Moore struck up the band into eight bars of "Where The Blue Of The Night" and suddenly Bing was there, a slight figure, immaculately dressed in a black tux and looking a tad uncomfortable, embarrassed perhaps. More polite applause. No, in fact it wasn't polite applause. It was a crescendo of sound as people who had been fans for his entire career suddenly realised that dreams do come true. Bing relaxed and started to sing.

Three hours later, the curtains parted for one last time

Kathryn joins her husband on stage at the Palladium.

and Bing was there again. It was his first concession to climate change. The jacket of the tux was slung over one shoulder, the black tie hung loose. He looked embarrassed again. The ovation was indescribable. The show had gone beyond anyone's wildest dreams. The songs alone stretched far and wide, with the 30-minute Crosby medley that simply beggared belief. But it was more the than just the songs. This was the Bing Crosby that everybody had loved almost all their lives – witty, self-deprecating, engaging – and now it had been laid out before us. We had been part of something special.

Sadly – outrageously – the Palladium shows were not filmed and although the concert was recorded for LP release, the audio only tells part of the story. But even a video recording could not have captured the electricity that was generated within the Palladium on those nights in the summer of '76. When Bing took the show to Edinburgh the following month, one review on the Edinburgh "Morning News" captured the feelings of every fan who had been there – "Bing At His Best – Now I Can Die Happy".

Ken Crossland

Editor: By coincidence, BBC Radio4 is to broadcast a show in their forthcoming 4-part series *For One Night Only* which will look at Bing's Palladium appearance in 1976. It will be 30 minutes long and will most probably go out at 10:30 a.m. on one of the first two Saturdays in September. I am helping the BBC so I hope that it will be an accurate depiction of that wonderful time.

Going through material to give the BBC some background, I naturally read Reg Bristo's wonderful account of Bing's Palladium appearances in BING #43

(September 1976). Many reviews from the newspapers were reproduced and I thought I'd let you see one to remind you of Bing's impact.

CROSBY - STILL THE MASTER

Bing Crosby told a lot of self-deprecating jokes when he opened his London Palladium fortnight on Monday. But the one that drew most laughter was about the car park attendant in Hollywood who said to him:

"Hey, didn't you used to be Bing Crosby?"

He laughed, with the audience. Later, hitting a high note, he chided himself, adding: "I haven't been up there in years." And when he danced across the stage rather boisterously with his wife, Bing poked his back, which evidently had reminded him he'd had it for 71 years. It would be easy, then, to concentrate on the nostalgia aspects and marvel at the sheer stamina of the man, who was up on stage for most of this three-hour show. But the audience was enthralled to find that as the evening wore on and he relaxed, his voice improved amazingly, getting richer and more resonant. By the end, when he sang the autobiographical 'That's What Life Is All About', Bing Crosby was singing excellently, at least as good as he has sounded in the past 20 years.

It was a sensational achievement by Bing to sweep aside the obvious charge that he had "done well for his age," for he gave a concert that would have been fine for someone 50 years younger and when the audience delivered that standing ovation at the end, it was not only his history, but a splendid show, which had triumphed. It all drew a neat parallel with Frank Sinatra, who these days tends to rely on who he is and what he stands for rather than his vocal strengths.

Crosby, of course, came out of the crooning era, when songs were about romance and lyrics enthused about kisses that enchanted and pennies from Heaven and blue moons and the beauty of the deep blue sea. At first, looking rather frail and vulnerable on the big stage, Bing seemed as if he might be forced into giving only a nod to the golden oldies. But when he warmed, he duetted with Rosemary Clooney, joked a lot with comedian Ted Rogers and brought on his family, he was fired enough to take a medley of the songs that spanned so many years. [There followed a list of the songs sung by Bing].

Crosby's edict has always been that the song's the thing, and he has rarely sought to print his personality on the words, which invariably stand up. Seeing him revive these standards, injecting them with a real freshness, was to understand again the power of simplicity in popular song...

A magical show then, with dignity and a delightful self-effacing stance, Crosby in his first London concerts during 50 years of music-making, is astonishingly agile and making more history.

Bing at the Palladium - for charity incidentally - will rank as one of the highlights of this or any year. He marked our lives and is demonstrating he still has it. Some say, nostalgia isn't what it used to be. Not so - in disciplined hands it can be richly rewarding,

(Ray Coleman, *Melody Maker*)

Bing About to Go Digital at Gonzaga

Stephanie Plowman, The Curator of the Gonzaga University Crosby Collection, sends a welcome update.

Last May, the Foley Center Library at Gonzaga University purchased software to be able to make digitized items from Special Collections available on the Internet. The software, CONTENTdm, allows the user to perform searches and view digital images such as photographs or documents. Universities across the country are purchasing this software to enable users to have better access to the collections. After scanning the item, metadata (data about data) is inputted to allow the user to search for subjects.

The library looks forward to putting this software to use immediately. One of the first projects will be using the Bing Crosby Collection. We will keep you informed as to when the items will be available for viewing. You will be able to view selected items, which previously you could only see if you came to campus. We will be gradually digitizing these materials, so be patient with us as we learn to use the software and its great potential.

George Rosenberg Papers at Gonzaga University

The Bing Crosby Collection at Gonzaga University now owns the George Rosenberg Papers on Bing Crosby. Rosenberg had been Bing Crosby's agent. After Rosenberg's death, Gary Spiegler purchased the collection from his widow. Because he knew the connection between Crosby and Gonzaga, Spiegler in 1990 contacted the university to donate a large portion of these papers. He kept some of the collection, specifically important autographs. Dean of the Library, Robert Burr picked up the collection from Mr. Spiegler, who was about to undergo major heart surgery. An inventory of the donation was made at the time. The collection was not further processed.

Spiegler died in 1995 of heart complications while on the operating table. In 2005, Spiegler's sister, the owner of the collection, tried to sell the remaining collection on eBay for $10,000. When it did not sell, the library contacted the auction agency representing Spiegler's sister to see if she would be willing to donate the collection and receive a tax deduction. Instead, she tried to sell the collection as a group for $5000. Since it still did not sell, she began offering the pieces as lots on eBay. After acquiring an eBay account with the name "gonzagacrosby", the library bought four lots. Judy Schmid purchased one lot and donated it to Gonzaga. After contacting the seller again, the library purchased the remaining collection outright. Since all of the lots offered on eBay were either purchased or donated, the collection originally owned by Gary Speigler should be

complete. Since these are the papers were created by George Rosenberg, the collection was given the title "George Rosenberg Papers". All of the separated pieces have been put back where it looked to have been originally housed.

The George Rosenberg Papers is a wonderful collection for Crosby research. It contains correspondence, contracts, memorandums, and clippings for *High Society*, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, *And Baby Makes Three*, *Bachelor Baby*, and *The Edsel Show*. There are a few photographs of Bing as well as Frank Sinatra movie stills. Additionally, the collection contains other printed materials such as books and magazine articles about Crosby. Currently, this collection is being processed and inventoried. Once completed, the inventory will be made available on the University's Crosby Collection webpage.

Stephanie Plowman

Editor: Great news! As mentioned in the editorial, Gonzaga needs money if it is to continue developing its Crosby collection and on the next page you will find a letter from Kathryn Crosby asking us to help if we can. The letter is self explanatory and if you are able to assist, checks should be made payable to:

Gonzaga University Crosby Collection

And mailed to:
Stephanie Plowman, Curator, Crosby Collection,
Gonzaga University, 502 E Boone Ave,
Spokane, WA 99258

All contributions are US income tax deductible.

The Macfarlanes Get Their Kicks on Route 66

Well, at least that was the original plan for our holiday in the mid-west USA in May and June this year. But, in the event, we started to detour after St. Louis and ultimately we did a circular tour encompassing Chicago – St. Louis – Kansas City – Dodge City – Oklahoma City – Branson – Milwaukee – Chicago and many points in between.

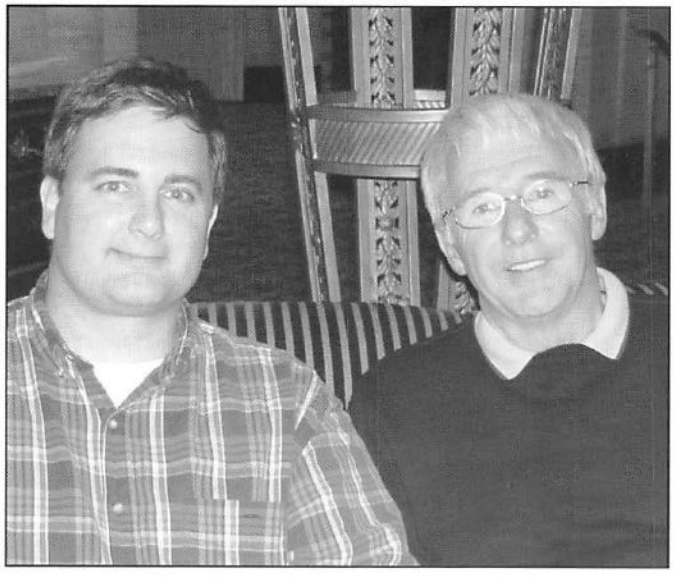
There were many Crosby-related moments, starting off with a most enjoyable meal with **Jon and Jane Oye** in Chicago. Jon and I didn't pause for breath for over 5 hours and fortunately our wives had plenty of interests in common which kept them talking too.

I hadn't planned to do any research into Bing's various activities during the holiday but Pat was keen to spend time in the various malls as we toured around. So I forced myself to pop into various public libraries and scour the old newspapers on microfilm for reports of Bing's visits to the locality. One query I wanted to check was the Rhythm Boys appearance in Rockford, Illinois in 1928. In his book about Bing, Gary Giddins tells about Bing being so drunk when he arrived that he spent a day in jail and missed one day's performances. How did the local paper cover that?

> *One of the Rhythm Boys failed to appear for Sunday's performance at the Palace theater and in consequence the headline set wasn't much. The other two worked valiantly enough to make their own stuff suffice, but the act was more or less flooey.*
> *(The Rockford Register-Gazette, November 19, 1928)*

But Bing soon recovered.

> *Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, with the line-up intact, after a makeshift performance on the first day, were liked by last night's audience. The boys combine a little nonsense with some soft melodies and contrive an act commendable for its cheerfulness.*
> *(Rockford Morning Star, November 20, 1928).*



Jon Oye (left) with Malcolm Macfarlane

When we passed through Abilene, we visited the wonderful Eisenhower complex and I remembered that Bing and Ike had often written to each other and in fact we reproduced some of their war time letters in an earlier magazine. With the patient assistance of the appropriately named Dwight, a researcher, we managed to dig out other letters from Bing to Mr. Eisenhower and it became clear that Bing was quite a fan of Ike. Every Christmas he would send him a small present such as a lighter or a St. Christopher medal. Then in May 1948, Bing's secretary requested an autographed photo of the General for Bing. Whether this was as a surprise birthday present for Bing or whether Bing actually asked for it himself is not known. For Bing to seek a photo like this must have been unprecedented. The photo appears on page 306 of Kathryn Crosby's book *My Life With Bing*. On December 31, 1957, Bing sent a telegram to Ike inviting him to golf in Bing's Pebble Beach tournament but the President declined.

In St. Louis, I just had to see **Wayne Martin**. He has

Kathryn Crosby

Hillsborough, California

Summer 2006

To My Friends –

Gonzaga University has long been the recipient of my husband Bing's affection. For forty years, he led alumni in fundraising and contributions, whether by hosting celebrity sporting events, assigning television production rights, writing checks, or including Gonzaga's name in any number of radio or television sketches. And over those forty years, he also donated a number of his personal awards, documents, and mementos for safekeeping, a practice our family continues to this day.

In May 2003, Gonzaga hosted a wonderful, joyful celebration in honor of Bing's 100th birthday – and over 650 of you attended that weekend! I met many of you, and felt your love for Bing; and my family and I are grateful that you continue to keep Bing in your hearts.

As Gonzaga moves into the 21st century, they will be acquiring new software to help them digitize and categorize the treasures in the Crosby Collection, now housed at the Crosby Student Center and the Foley Library on campus. This new software will also allow them to better document the items they are lacking to make their collections complete. In addition, because of the immense outpouring of interest in Bing, improving accessibility to these items is a must.

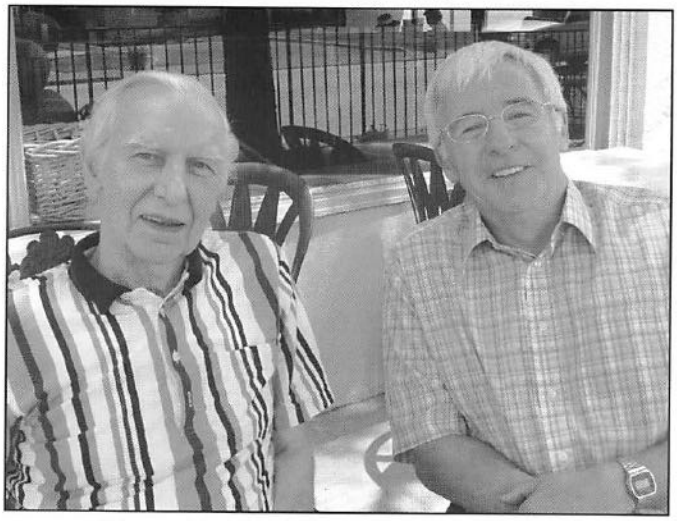
Won't you consider making a tax-deductible financial contribution to Gonzaga's Crosby Collection? Your contribution will help Gonzaga in its efforts to expand the Crosby Collection – your donations of unique "Crosbyana" are also appreciated!

What better way for fans to honor Bing's memory by supporting his alma mater? He'd be proud and pleased to know that Gonzaga is the recipient of your support. My family and I thank you!

Fondly,

Kathryn Crosby

done so much for the Crosby cause over the years and he and I conducted the initial negotiations regarding the merger of Club Crosby and the International Crosby Circle. We had a nice lunch together and it was good to meet him in the flesh after so many years.



Wayne Martin (left) with that man again.

In Wisconsin, we had a superb evening at **Greg Van Beek's** home seeing his wonderful Crosbyana items and in Milwaukee, **Barry Stapleton** showed me the extensive Crosby collection in the Ward Irish Music Archives.

We also spent a pleasant couple of days in Kansas City but **Steven Lewis** (Bing Crosby Internet Museum) had wisely run for the hills after informing Homeland Security of my visit! (Seriously though, he was away at a conference in Austin, Texas otherwise we would have met up).

So we covered a lot of ground (about 3000 miles) and fitted a fair amount of Crosbyana into a great holiday.

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING ON THE BOX

On a recent screening in the UK of the quiz show *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* a contestant was asked which of the following artistes had Burbank California Airport re-named after him: was it Bing Crosby, George Burns, Bob Hope or Jack Benny? The gentleman thought for a while and said; "Well, the only one I've really heard of is Bob Hope; so I'll go for him." Such is the power of the media that unless there is a dramatic turnaround, public awareness is going to remain ignorant of past performers.

In an exchange of emails with *Gold For Grown Ups* presenter, **Paul Barnes** asked this column, in forthright manner, to publish details of where to find his and similar programmes on the dial of our wirelesses. "I often come across people who never knew such music existed." was one of his comments regarding new found listeners. More and more it becomes apparent that we must continue to press for programmes that reflect our interests, and support those that do in the hope of passing the baton of good music appreciation to future generations.

It will be readily understood that it would be impossible to lend an ear to every radio station in the U.K., even with the benefit of the internet [and certainly none in the U.S.A.], so dependence on devoted members is essential to maintaining this column. Sadly, they are the same, regular few only; and they include those whose names I hear with requests for Crosby on barely a dozen national and regional programmes throughout the country. Their names have all appeared here before and I thank them, collectively, for the music.

Bing being an honorary Irishmen as it were helps, I suppose, for presenter **Eddie Murphy** emails:

> 'Just thought I would fill you in on some of the recordings I have featured on "Crosby Corner" over the last number of weeks on my radio programme "SOUNDS NICE" on SHANNONSIDE NORTHERN SOUND fm Radio, here in Ireland. I'm very pleased that we get a very positive reaction from listeners and I've heard that a few members tape the tracks each week. Bing is definitely not forgotten here in Ireland.'

Well, that's good news! Eddie goes on to list around thirty tracks that range through *Young And Healthy, With My Eyes Wide Open I'm Dreaming, Muskrat Ramble, My Resistance Is Low, Baia,* and *Spring, Spring, Spring.* Among those played were several wireless broadcast numbers and duets; and I'm sure you will have noted that lovely Woodbury track! Thanks, Eddie, for providing your listeners with such a great variety of Mr. Crosby.

BIRTHDAY BOY

The summer edition of BING magazine always reflects events relating to his birthday anniversary and this was definitely not forgotten by most of the regulars, or at least the dedicated listeners who remind them.

In the USA, **David Cummings** observed Bing's birthday in great style during his weekly "Rockin' in Rhythm" show on KFAI (Minneapolis & St Paul). Among the highlights were the July 1944 live radio reunion of Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey on the Kraft

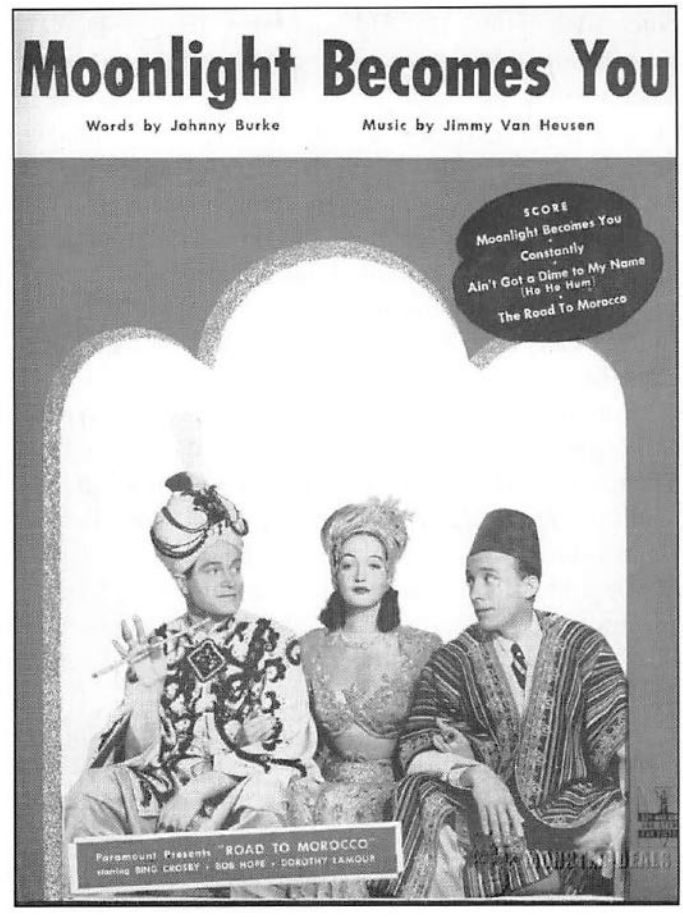
Music Hall together with the Kraft macaroni and cheese ad touting the product as costing only one ration point.

Those in the southeastern Wisconsin listening area could have heard **Dave Hendrickson's** 4th annual *Bing Crosby Birthday Bash* on WJUB 1420AM The Breeze (Plymouth, WI). This was four solid hours of nothing but Bing Crosby music, including some rarities from Greg Van Beek's collection.

In the UK, David Lowe with his *As Time Goes By* slot on BBC Radio Devon, 103.4 fm Saturdays 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. and again on Sundays, same time, with *Singers & Swingers*, played four songs recorded by Bing on his forty-first birthday. The first time that Bing was involved in a recording session on his birthday was in 1929 when Paul Whiteman called him to the studio to cut *Reaching For Someone [And Not Finding Anyone There]*. Bing gives a very spirited, solo rendition of this Walter Donaldson – Edgar Leslie song reinforcing his position as Whiteman's number one vocalist in the pre-production run up to *King of Jazz*. Finally, in 1954, on his natal day anniversary, he recorded eighteen tracks for the Autobiography set. But back to David Lowe for a moment; the diversity of his selections heard ranged from *One Of The Roving Kind* through *Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day. Silver Threads Among The Gold*, duets with the Misses Clooney, Lee and Maxwell plus the most successful girl group in the history of popular music; and we all know who that is! The boys also got a look in with the two Louis's; Messrs. Armstrong and Jordan: the latter being Bing's sparring partner on *Your Socks Don't Match*. I've often wondered if this was written by Leon Carr and Leo Corday as a musical riposte to *Your Feet's Too Big* !

Trevor Fry's *The Late Show*, Radio Bristol 95.5 fm 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. whilst more up front is similar in style to David's but with less intimacy. The Bing tracks are mostly from the 'Forties and forwards featuring the up-tempo tracks of which there is ample choice, of course. Whilst we were treated to numbers such as the bouncy *You're In Kentucky Sure As You're Born* [one of the Pete Moore enhanced Buddy Cole backings] and *Some Sunny Day*, it was really nice to hear the rarely heard *How Green Was My Valley* and *Tie A Yellow Ribbon*. Of the latter, Bing was still in very good voice in 1973 even if the Billy Byers accompaniment for this Levine – Brown hit song was a little honky-tonk. One anomaly crept in to Trevor Fry's programme one evening when he introduced Bing and Doris Day duetting *Powder Your Face With Sunshine*. Bing did sing this song, just the once, on his final Philco Radio Time broadcast but never with the 'Divine Doris'. In fact the male voice belonged to Buddy Clark and the song was a hit for Doris and Buddy in 1949. However, we must not let such minor peccadilloes detract from the overall enjoyment of worthwhile listening pleasure and if you reside anywhere west of Stonehenge you should be able to tune your wireless set into both these regional stations - not forgetting **Jim Reilly's** *Angel Radio* station, Havant, on 101.1 fm that advertises itself with the slogan 'Snap, Crackle But No Pop'.

Most of the programmes that we listen to on the regional wireless stations cater for requests and dedications. Happily, there's always a Crosby song with a lyric that just fits the bill, for as we heard him sing on *String Of Pearls*; **Christine Prentice's** lively show on GMR [Greater Manchester Radio], *There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About*. For an ex-wartime parachute packer a request landed safely on Christine's desk for *Sierra Sue* and for the inevitable wedding anniversaries *You Are My Sunshine* [think 'Winnie' and Clementine] and that lovely Rose - Kahal – Seusse romantic number *The Night Is Young And You're So Beautiful*. Whilst both the Alan Cohen and Gordon Rose accompanied versions by Bing from 1976 / 77 are a delight to listen to, how remiss of Jack Kapp to let this one escape a commercial recording when it was composed in 1936. But perhaps you were lucky enough to hear Bing singing it to the accompaniment of the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra on Kraft Music Hall that year when Bing was at his peak! Probably the best of all the 'ROAD' ballads was *Moonlight Becomes You*; certainly the most famous. A slightly misguided gentleman wrote to Ms. Prentice requesting this song by a certain Francis Albert S., but fortunately it is not in her collection; so her regular Bing Spot on that occasion set the programme, and the listener chappie, back on course with the only record that should have been made in the first place!


Moonlight Becomes You
Words by Johnny Burke
Music by Jimmy Van Heusen
SCORE
Moonlight Becomes You
Constantly
Ain't Got a Dime to My Name
(Ho Ho Hum)
The Road To Morocco
Paramount Presents "ROAD TO MOROCCO"
starring BING CROSBY · BOB HOPE · DOROTHY LAMOUR

GMR also plays host to **Frank Wappat**; he of the 'none-of-this-vinyl-compact-disc-nonsense' who revels in 78 revolutions whenever he can. *The Little Things In Life* is probably one of Irving Berlin's least remembered philosophical songs written at a time when forbearance and resignation were about all one had to survive on; but Bing, with more than a hint of an emotional 'Crosby cry', makes the Gus Arnheim accompanied recording an early favourite among collectors. Frank also featured Bing and Al Jolson in tandem and once again read out a tape letter that he, personally, had from Bing to substantiate his regard for his favourite performer.

With **Angela Rennells** jetting off to the land of Oz for a break it left hubbie Bill to carry their three hour musical kaleidoscope entirely on his own for much of the period in question. Though she was back in time to play the second of the two *Would You* songs that Bing recorded. The Brown-Freed waltz from 1936 is as charming a song as you're ever likely to hear whilst the Burke-Van Heusen take on the title comes from *Road To Utopia* and is sung in the film by Dottie Lamour. Bing recorded it, in fact, some six months before the film was made. In a pleasant change from the regular John Scott Trotter accompaniments, the programme also featured Jimmy Dorsey backing Bing on *The Things We Did Last Summer; When Mother Natures Sings her Lullaby*, with Eddie Dunstedter on the organ; Les Brown directing a driving arrangement to *She Is The Sunshine Of Virginia,* composed as far back as the first World War and a lush, Victor Young arrangement serving Bing so well on *The Kiss In Your Eyes.* For those of us who 'collect' Bing in other song lyrics, Bill also played a Tommy Dorsey record entitled *Will You Still Be Mine?* on which Connie Haines sings the line "when Crosby's horses win a race." *Harmony Night* is a BBC Thames Valley Sunday night broadcast with varying frequencies according to the county whence you listen. Ten to one you'll be available to tune in for that's the time and duration of this programme that is all about requests, dedications and the best of popular music as we know it. If in the course of any broadcast you don't hear Bing Crosby you are definitely tuned to the wrong station!

Another collectable lyric occurred on **Paul Barnes'** *Gold for Grown Ups* courtesy of Janet Seidel, a chanteuse in the mould of Diana Krall, who in her rendition of *De-Lovely* comes up with the slightly clumsy line "Oh, charming sir, the way you sing, 't'would break the heart of Mrs. Crosby's Bing" and I am informed by Paul that she also acknowledges The Boss, in better fashion, in her version of *These Foolish Things.*

Guaranteed to have been a soccer free zone during the World Cup media frenzy there was, and is, however, no escape from good music and engaging comment on each and every Saturday evening on Barnesy's programme. As a recipient of both the Jonzo releases and the ICC calendar there is plenty of scope there for Crosby content within the programme. Pretty well all the musical accompanists from Irving Aaronson to Betty Zins are paraded, expounded and dissected as Paul trawls the Crosby archives for something a little bit different [though he has his regular favourites, too] and one such was the newly discovered unreleased take –3 of *Ol' Man River.* Dating from 11th January 1928 this little gem was only Bing's third solo with Whiteman and illustrates without doubt his jazz roots and his ability to complement the musical exponents of that art by whom he was surrounded at the time. This was amplified by Barnesy in a later broadcast when he played two tracks from the gold plated Bregman disc, *'Deed I Do* and *They All Laughed* , further supplemented with *Let's Do It* and *Moonburn*, about all of which Paul said 'proving beyond peradventure that fundamentally he is a jazz singer.' Your standard Crosby ballads don't get much of a look in, it's true, but along with many a jaunty number there are the radio excerpts to enjoy: Bing with Bob Hope and Monica Lewis with *I Wish I Wuz* from Chesterfield 16th January 1952 and Irving Berlin guesting with Al Jolson on Philco Radio Time, 7th May 1947. Of Irving's famous but croaky rendition of *Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning* Jolson was to say; 'I know you have a reputation for never lifting a tune but at least I thought you could carry one!' One track I particularly enjoyed hearing once more was the Fred Koehler – Harold Arlen song *I've Got The World On A String* which Bing recorded immediately on publication in 1933. Given as a representative recording in Roger Kinkle's encyclopedia of popular music and jazz, Bing begins with the very important verse which says that despite all the joys of spring a 'special phrase' is needed to describe his feelings of being totally besotted with love. It would have been not only discourteous to Koehler to have left out the verse but deprived the listener of the full meaning of the title; a situation that happened with many of Bing's later recordings. Johnny Burke being a particular victim of such truncated lyrics.

Full details of the time and location of Paul Barnes' enjoyable programme are as follows: Saturdays, 18.00 until 21.00 (BST) on world wide web: www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk or tune in to

BBC Radio Cambs - 95.7 and 96.0 FM
BBC Essex - 95.3 and 103.5 FM
BBC Radio Norfolk - 95.1 and 104.4 FM
BBC Radio Northampton - 103.6 and 104.2 FM
BBC Radio Suffolk - 95.5 and 103.9 and 104.6 FM

Russell Davies invariably finds a Crosby record around which to weave his amusing dissertations, oftimes flavoured with just a hint of raciness, that liven up the Sunday post prandial period of 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. on BBC R2. Examples would be *In My Merry Oldsmobile*, written by Vincent Bryan & Gus Edwards in honour of the first cross country car trip in the USA in 1905 which boasts the risqué lyric line - 'You can go as far as you like with me' - that would surely have

passed unnoticed by the pure of mind, suggested Russell, and also the 'fig-leaf' subtitle of *Let's Fall In Love* that Cole Porter appended to *Let's Do It*. Not that such a sophisticate as Porter was one to appease the puritanical as songs such as *Love For Sale* and *Let's Misbehave* will testify. Russell was also to draw on *Makin' Whoopee*, by Gus Kahn, as an example of a song revelling in its own censorious message. Here it was noted Bing routed the 'eunuch generation' with a much more baritone delivery. His interpretation of the lyric within the arrangement is not as suggestive as, say, Eddie Cantor's, being more of an up-tempo dance tune with amusing words than a warning to any potential philanderer.

In a series celebrating the great lyric writers Russell chose *What Price Lyrics* written by Bing, Harry Barris and Matty Malneck, and recorded by The Rhythm Boys, as a starting point. The premise of that song being why rack your brains for words when wah-da-da and vo-deoh-doh are utterances enough to convey a good, melodic rhythm. A further, Crosby example, was *An Apple For The Teacher* wherein Bing and Connee rhyme 'ain't' with quaint in a typical example of Johnny Burke's streetwise jargon. Though not in this programme, one might also mention Connee Boswell's pronunciation of 'owl' to rhyme with 'foul' and 'towel' to fit the melody of the Mercer-Hanighen, ornithological composition, *Bob White*. Closing the Russell Davies revue is a mention of his playing the rejected version of *A Gal In Calico* L4169-A from Vol. 42 of the amazing Jonzo series [now up to Vol.45 by the way!]. The released version of this song was used recently to introduce the 60th anniversary of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour. A nice little tribute to Bing!

BBC Radio Lincolnshire on fm 94.9; fm 104.7 or 1368 AM features **Howard Leader** every Sunday from 4 to 7 p.m. with, basically, a big band swing type of show. Typical Crosby tracks have been *When My Dreamboat Comes Home*, on which brother Bob's Bob-Cats do the musical honours, *Dinah* and *Mexicali Rose*. There have also been a few ballads such as *Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?* and *Love Thy Neighbour*, but these, too, are touched by the precursory hint of swing.

HALL OF FAME

On the 30th April BBC Essex had a special tribute to Bing in honour of his impending birthday. A three hour programme on Eric Hall's regular Sunday afternoon slot ably assisted by Oliver Rogers. News of the event preceded its broadcast so that there was plenty of time for local ICC members to participate one way or another. Principal guest on the programme was our prestigious producer Ken Barnes, but there was also a 'phone-in interview with this magazine's editor, Malcolm, who in stating his discovery of Bing through the *Bing Sings* programme on Radio Luxemburg in the late 1950's went on to say that his favourite period of Crosby recordings was 1938 to 1942: few would disagree. Eric Hall kept pressing to be made an honorary member, but the subliminal message from Malcolm was that this would not be forthcoming. Just how many honorary members can the Club carry, or even afford? Malcolm gave out Secretary Michael Crampton's address with the offer of a free magazine and the suggestion to listeners that being a member of the ICC would enhance their knowledge and appreciation of the special programme's raison d'etre. During Malcolm's 'phone-in one of a number of quiz questions asked was from what film did *Swinging On A Star* come? The prize being a copy of BING No. 142. Our ultra keen member Doreen Hubbard called up on the 'blower' with the correct answer but as she already had the magazine and read it from cover to cover [including the printing credits on the back cover I suggest] she generously donated it to an elderly lady who had just sung *True Love* over the 'phone. Two other 'phone-in listeners are worthy of mention: firstly, Lily from Chelmsford, aged ninety-one, who not only gave *South Of The Border* as the correct answer to another quiz question but trilled her way through the entire lyric with barely a tremolo to mark her advanced years; and secondly Wally Oldfield who corrected an adamant Ken Barnes who told Eric that Bing had never commercially recorded *Again*. Never one to miss an opportunity our self-styled 'English Bing' treated listeners to his own rendition. Ken could do nothing other than graciously defer to Wally's superior knowledge on this occasion. Ken had came into the studio around the halfway mark and stayed until the conclusion reiterating much of which we have heard about his original meeting with Bing and the subsequent pairing of him with Fred Astaire on the TOP BILLING album. Most of us will

have been entertained by Ken's anecdotes about those final years of Bing's recordings on previous programmes but it is well worth reminding readers that Ken's book, THE CROSBY YEARS, published in 1980 by Elm Tree books not only expands on that important period of Bing's life but also serves as a complete discography and filmography. I'm sure it would be still available if you look hard enough.

To bring some variety to the programme Eric and Oliver introduced Crosby songs performed by other artistes including Mel Tormé, Pearl Bailey and Frankie Laine, a singer for whom Ken once produced an album and who is still performing at the age of ninety-three! There was also a very nice rendition of *But Beautiful* complete with, to me, a previously unheard verse from Miss Alma Cogan. However, still plenty of time beyond the amateur phone-in performances, and reminiscing to hear the real McCoy with the Buddy Cole / Pete Moore accompanied *I Can't Get Started* [great work from Kenny Baker on trumpet to rival the Bunny Berigan original] *Muddy Water* from the autobiography release; *Galway Bay; That's What Life Is All About*; *Children Mountain Greenery,* which was chosen by Ken as his favourite Bing track outside of his own productions, and *Alexander's Ragtime Band* from the Bing and Al Jolson set again produced by Ken.

Finally, one engaging story came from a listener who 'phoned in with the story of his uncle who was serving aboard the destroyer Tynedale when it was torpedoed off Malta on the 12th December 1943. His father had told him to always wear a belt so that 'in an emergency you can strap yourself to something.' As a result he saved not only himself but twenty-one other crew members including the ship's captain. Being so close to the Yuletide season he kept up his and their spirits by singing *White Christmas* as they awaited rescue.

WHAT'S ON AT THE FLICKS?

Well, if you want to view screenings of Bing movies other than from your videos or DVDs it would seem that the good old US of A is the only place to be. One of two meagre offerings in the UK was *Mr. Music*, which had an outing on Sky Cinema, and then of course there was as usual, *High Society* on TCM. As with the last issue of this magazine I can offer a little bit of serendipity by the viewing of a romantic drama called *Bounce* (2000). During the course of the screenplay the heroine (Gwyneth Paltrow) quotes her late husband as 'doing a Danny Kaye' from the film *White Christmas* when Danny trades on his broken arm to curry favour from Bing. In her instance she had accidentally broken her husband's nose while in childbirth! [Don't ask!]

So, as the following list suggests, our American members have been getting the best deal over recent months, thanks mainly to the great efforts of Turner Classic Movies.

Bing on TV in the USA since our last issue

American Masters: The Cole Porter Story	PBS
Check And Double Check	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
Flip Wilson with Bing & The Supremes	TV Land
Here Comes the Groom	TCM
High Time	Fox Movie Channel
High Society	TCM
Man on Fire	Cinemax
My Favorite Blonde	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Robin and the 7 Hoods	INHD2
Road to Morocco	TCM
Road to Singapore	TCM
Road To Utopia	TCM
Stagecoach	Encore Western
The Bells of St. Mary's	AMC
The Country Girl	HBO
The Honeymooners: Ralph Goes Hollywood	Goodlife
The Princess and the Pirate	TCM
We're Not Dressing	TCM

Finally, as we went to press, Greg Van Beek advised us that on Saturday, July 29 from 1pm - 5pm, Chuck Schaden's *Those Were The Days* program, over WDCB 90.9 FM in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, was going to feature as its theme "Bing Crosby's Family and Friends" for the entire 4 hour broadcast. Four complete GE shows from 1952 will be heard, along with excerpts from four Chesterfield shows from 1950 and 1951. The shows will be available live on the internet at http://www.wdcb.org

Bert Bishop, June 22, 2006

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Cindy Walker, the prolific Texan country songwriter died in March at the age of 87. She wrote over 500 songs including "You Don't Know Me", "Dream Baby" and "Bubbles In My Beer". In 1970, she was the first woman inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Cindy received her first songwriting credit when Bing recorded "Lone Star Trail" in 1940 and enjoyed a minor hit with it. She was briefly a Decca recording artist, enjoying some success with "When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again" (which she didn't write) in 1944. She received some interesting press coverage when she first arrived in Hollywood.

> . . .But when a gal can sing and, what's more, sing songs she composes herself, that's evidently another matter. For today, the latest donation of Texas to films finds herself already in pictures, only 24 hours after riding down Sunset Boulevard intent on giving Bing Crosby an original cowgirl song "just for fun."

Cindy Walker is her name–117 pounds of beauty, music and natural showmanship. The "Cactus Cinderella" came here with her father, Quincey Walker, cotton broker of Phoenix, Ariz., to visit while her pappy attended to business matters. Cindy drove out to Bing Crosby's Hollywood office to give him her new song–and the writer, too.

Things happened swiftly to Cindy from then on. She signed a contract, got a part in a Universal picture, wrote and sold the two songs she was asked to sing in the picture and moved into a new Hollywood home–all within 24 hours.

Cindy was born in Mart., Texas, and has written 149 tunes. She wrote, "Casa de Manana" for Billy Rose. Now Bing is going to put her in western pictures. Some gal, this Cindy.

(*Los Angeles Evening Herald Express*, April 15, 1940)

Cindy did appear in several films in the early 1940s including *Ride, Tenderfoot, Ride* (1940) with Gene Autry. Our thanks to Gary Hamann for researching the press clipping. Gary publishes a daily blog on the 'Net giving excerpts from his many books and it's well worth a look. Go to http://gdhamann.blogspot.com/

Jack Wild, who died on March 1 of oral cancer aged 53, was a classic case of a child actor who found success too early; aged 16 he won an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of The Artful Dodger in the Lionel Bart/Carol Reed film *Oliver!* (1968), but within a few years he had begun a downward spiral into depression and alcoholism. With his diminutive stature, waif-like face and Jack-the-lad combination of wide-eyed innocence and streetwise guile, Wild was perfect for the role of the Cockney pickpocket. He seemed set for a successful film career and he went on to play the lead in *HR Pufnstuf* (1969), a television series about a boy stranded on a magic island with a talking flute, a friendly dragon and talking trees. Wild filmed 17 episodes and appeared in a feature film based on the show. He had starring roles in the Alan Parker film *Melody* (1971) and in *Flight Of The Doves* (1971). By the age of 18 he was a millionaire with a fan club of teenage girls, but within a couple of years he had developed diabetes and a serious drink problem. When the Hollywood film offers began to dry up, Wild returned to Britain where, in the 1970s, he did television commercials and took small parts in various TV series. Then the television offers, too, dwindled. At the time Wild was inclined to blame his "typecasting" as the Artful Dodger, but the real problem was drink. "From the late 1970s, I wasn't fit to work," he admitted later. His only involvement with Bing was when he guested on Bing's Christmas Special in 1970.

Ken Sykora, who died on March 7, was, at the peak of his career, one of Britain's most popular radio personalities. A multi-award-winning broadcaster and musician, he made regular appearances on all the BBC's networks. For BBC Radio in the early 1960s, he presented the auto-biographical series, *Be My Guest* and on it, he talked to an "A"-list group of celebrity guests, including Bing, Bob Hope, Segovia, Isaac Stern, Count Basie, Gloria Swanson, Bud Flanagan, and others about their lives, experiences and backgrounds. Ken was made an honorary member of the British Crosby Society (the forerunner of the ICC) in 1961.

Tom Hansen, dancer and choreographer was 80 when he passed away on April 27. Hansen began his career in New York City as a chorus dancer at the Roxy Theatre. He was a chorus dancer in the original Broadway production of *Kiss Me, Kate* in 1948, starring Alfred Drake and Patricia Morison. One of his first jobs in television was as a dancer for "Your Hit Parade," a weekly show, in the 1950s. As a choreographer, Hansen worked on "The Dinah Shore Chevy Show" in the late 1950s and on many television specials with Bing, Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra. He captured wide attention as choreographer for "The Red Skelton Show" in the 1960s. His "Tom Hansen Dancers" were regulars on the show for eight years. He later worked on a number of Las Vegas stage shows with dancer Juliet Prowse, singer-dancer Jane Powell, comedians Steve Allen and Jayne Meadows, and others.

In our last issue, we gave the sad news of Basil Grillo's death. This prompted Arne Fogel to write about a memorable meeting he had with Mr. Grillo in 1978.

An afternoon with Mr. Grillo

An interesting thing happened to me on September 24th, 1978. I got married. On September 25th, as one might expect, my new wife & I went on our honeymoon. Deciding to spend our first newly-married weeks in California, we split the time between San Francisco (for her) and Hollywood (for me). The Hollywood leg was something of a "working" honeymoon, in that I shopped a few song demos around to various record labels. In addition, another "non-honeymoon-related" activity had been planned: I was determined to take a satchel-ful of listener mail I'd received during the run of my radio series "Crosbyana" (KTWN-FM, Minneapolis-St. Paul), and use it to gain entrance into the "Crosby Office" on North Robertson in Hollywood. Of course, I knew that Bing, nearly a year dead, wouldn't be there.... but I just wanted to "be" there, myself, in the space where Bing had made decisions about his career, conferred with his partners and advisors, etc.... Just to get the feel of what had been "Bing's place".

I can no longer recall if I called the Crosby office before leaving Minnesota, or if I called while in California. I do remember that once I stated that I was the host of a radio show on which Bing's records were played every week, I was greeted with the telephonic equivalent of open arms..... and making an appointment to stop in and see the office and spend some time there

was as easy as pie. And "spending time" at the Crosby office meant spending time with Mr. Basil Grillo.

After a period of 28 years, it's only natural that some of the experience has faded from my memory. Happily, much has remained, as well, from what turned out to be an extremely pleasant and stimulating late afternoon & evening spent with Mr. Grillo, whose name I had run across before, during my years as a Crosby follower. He was one of three people in the office when I arrived that Monday afternoon of October 2nd, 1978. One of the others was Ms. Nancy Briggs, who greeted me warmly when I arrived, asking me amiably about my radio show and thanking me for playing her late boss's recordings so faithfully. She informed me that Mr. Grillo would be seeing me shortly, as he was just wrapping up another meeting - and would I "please, take a seat?"

After the passage of several minutes, Mr. Grillo's meeting broke, and his office door opened. Out stepped Grillo, along with a man whose face had become familiar to me over the previous three years, from various record jackets, magazines, and Crosby-oriented publications. His name was Ken Barnes.

I have no idea if Ken, who I've now come to know as a delightfully kind and generous friend, retains any memory of meeting me that far off day outside Grillo's office. I do know that he was most friendly and warm as Ms. Briggs introduced me to him, and I relished the opportunity to thank him, on behalf of Crosby fans everywhere, for his massive contributions to the legend of Bing Crosby's recording career. We chatted for a few moments more and I learned that the meeting just wrapping up had something to do with the 1950s & 60s radio tapes with Buddy Cole that Ken and Pete Moore would soon be overdubbing with new orchestral arrangements, for commercial record release. Before long, Ken said "goodbye" and left the office. It would be 24 years before we would meet again, this time at Hofstra University for the "BING! Crosby And American Culture" conference.

Now, it was my turn with Mr. Grillo. It soon became obvious that his workday was essentially over (it was late afternoon), and that he was in no particular hurry to rush through our get-together. The first thing he did was to start pouring over the huge volume of letters from my listeners which I had brought in for him. He read a number of them out loud, all the while with a huge, satisfied smile on his face. It was a proud moment for me, as I contemplated having brought some pleasure to such a close associate of Bing's, for work I had done on behalf of the perpetuation of Bing's memory. There was, however, one bittersweet aspect to this examination of the letters: Several times, Grillo remarked after finishing this or that letter that "....The old man would've loved this....." or "Bing should've seen this...." Of course, it wasn't occurring to Grillo that I was crushed slightly to realize that these letters, some of which were relating to broadcasts from BEFORE Bing's death, and written to me at that time, could've brought pleasure and satisfaction to Bing himself. If only I'd contacted the office BEFORE October 1977..... Oh, well.....

We talked about business, we talked about me, as Grillo was interested to learn how a relatively young fellow such as myself (I was 29 at the time), could've become such a huge Crosby fan and dedicated collector. At one point, I told him that one of Bing's later recordings which had been proving most difficult for me to locate was his 45 rpm single of "Where The Rainbow Ends". The title seemed to ring a bell for him, but he was by no means really familiar with the disc. He asked me when it was recorded, and for what company. I told him "Pickwick (P.I.P.) Records, February 1968, during the *Thoroughly Modern Bing* LP sessions." He turned away with a sort of "far away" look, got up, walked over to a metal pull-out filing cabinet (among a wall full of them), and opened it up. He sorted through the files for a bit, and suddenly pulled out a copy of the record itself and handed it to me! I remember wondering "what other precious Crosby 'treasures' lay sorted away in those file cabinets"?! After a few moments discussing the record, and just as I was beginning to think that Grillo was, perhaps, offering to let me have the record as a souvenir, he casually took it from my hands and put it back in the cabinet (I eventually acquired the song on vinyl a few years later when I picked up the British version of "Thoroughly Modern Bing", and once again in the 90s on CD on one of that album's digital re-issues).

Arne Fogel with Rosemary Clooney in 2001.

I asked Mr. Grillo about Bing's apparent level of regard for his fans, and how I'd heard that he valued them very highly, and showed more consideration towards them than perhaps most other stars of his calibre. "Oh, yes", came Grillo's reply, "That's all very true, he valued them very highly, and devoted a lot of time to them..." Grillo then added, "....It's too bad he couldn't devote a little more of that time to some of the people around him...." This took the conversation into a somewhat more personal realm than I was expecting, but I followed along. "Was Bing a good guy to work for?" was my next question. The emphatic nature of

Grillo's answer was something I'll never forget: "Oh, yes, he was, Bing was a good man...but you have to understand one thing.....He was a MOOOODY Irishman!"

Mr. Grillo then told of a fascinating experience he'd had with Bing, one that revealed much, and ultimately, for me, adds to Bing's mystique and fascinating complexity. Grillo said that at some point, after they'd been working together for a few years, Bing asked Basil to accompany him on a fishing trip or hunting trip (I can't remember which) over a long weekend. Grillo was flattered to be asked, and excited to go. "But from the moment we arrived at the (hunting or fishing location), until we came back to town three days later," said Grillo, "...Bing scarcely uttered ONE WORD to me. He was totally silent, in his own world....and it was just the two of us for that whole time....."

But perhaps the most surprising comment Grillo made to me that day - surprising in light of Bing's personna, public comments, and supposed attitude - came when Grillo was discussing the extent to which Bing was attentive to the diminishing sales of his records in the later part of his career. "As a fan and outside observer, I never got the impression that he cared particularly about that sort of thing", I said. Grillo then turned quite somber, and answered in a very heartfelt, deliberate way: "....Oh, yes... Oh, yes. He cared very, very much..." The sadly penetrating look on Grillo's face suggested to me that Bing was more troubled regarding the changes in his general popularity and the mass acceptance of his music than any of us would ever have imagined.

I wish I could remember if there were any poignant closing comments at the conclusion of my time with Bing's business manager. I can't really remember specifically how the meeting ended. But I do know that the time spent at the Crosby office was enjoyable, pleasant and educational, and I left with a feeling of satisfaction that I'd had the opportunity to discuss Bing with someone who knew him well, and who obviously admired him greatly. The overriding feeling of high regard for Crosby on behalf of Grillo was strongly felt. Also, Grillo seemed to exude a real sense of PRIDE: Mr. Grillo was proud of his association with Bing Crosby, took delight in the letters in praise of Crosby that I'd set before him to read, and took delight in discussing the subject of Crosby with a young enthusiast. His observations, while at times peppered with this or that mildly revealing aspect of Crosby's occasional eccentricities, were overwhelmingly positive and undeniably affectionate. I left the office on Robertson Blvd. with the feeling that, in getting to know Mr. Grillo, I had gotten to know Bing a bit better as well.

Arne Fogel www.arnefogel.com

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

There has not been a time in my life that I was not aware of Bob Hope. I have been one of his countless fans since my formative years when I listened faithfully to his Tuesday night radio show.

Over the years I was privileged to interview and socialize with him on a number of occasions. In fact, one time while visiting his home with Rich Little, he surprised me by telling Rich that he not only knew me, but that we had "worked together". He obviously meant that I had interviewed him several times. However, I revelled in the thought that we had actually "worked together".

He was always impressed with my total recall of his and Bing Crosby's careers. Once, when I mentioned the background behind a funny but obscure scene in one of their movies, he said in amazement, "How do you know that?" I got a big laugh from him when I replied that I knew his life better than my own.

I first met the legendary showman in 1949. Our last lengthy interview was in 1985 at his beautiful estate in Toluca Lake, California where he and his wife, Dolores, and their four adopted children took up residence in 1950.

A young Gord Atkinson 'working' with Bob Hope

The master showman, who elevated the comedy monologue to an entertainment art form, honed and refined his distinctive brand of humour during the wartime years of the 1940s. His irreverent and breezy style of delivery never failed to amuse and delight the men and women of the allied forces. As the entertainment world's most famous "soldier in greasepaint" he brought laughter and a touch of home to service personnel around the globe - from World War II to Desert Storm.

It was while taping my last interview with Bob that, in a wistful moment, he reflected warmly on the legacy

of his old pal and comedy partner: "The marvellous thing about Bing is that we still have his wonderful recordings and films and they are permanent. They will be here when we are gone and that's a comforting thought."

Bing was never happier than when he was working with Bob. He remembered those happy times as we reminisced at his home in Hillsboro, California. "The most satisfying movies to me were the 'Road' pictures. I believe they provided people with a lot of fun. They were a pleasure to make with Bob and Dorothy Lamour."

"We had a lot of respect for one another," Bob recalled fondly. "As you know he had a great sense of humour and we had a lot of fun and travelled extensively together. I guess we played at least a hundred exhibition games of golf for charities around the world."

The Boys on the Road to Singapore

Before he turned to comedy Bob was a song and dance man in vaudeville. On Broadway as a leading man he introduced three classic ballads. "I've been singing ever since I started in show business," he reminded me. "I introduced 'I Can't Get Started With You' in the *Ziegfield Follies of 1935*, 'It's Delovely' with Ethel Merman in *Red Hot and Blue* and 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' in *Roberta*.

Apart from the 'Road' pictures with Bing, the Hope box office hits included, *The Cat And The Canary*, *The Ghost Breakers*, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *The Paleface*, *The Seven Little Foys* and *Beau James* to name only a few.

One of the world's most identifiable American performers was born in Eltham, England. He was one of seven sons. His mother was the daughter of a Welsh sea captain and his father was a stonemason. He was a little boy when his family emigrated to Cleveland, Ohio, where his father had relatives. Christened Leslie Townes Hope for his mother's side of the family, he decided early in his career to drop Leslie and call himself 'Bob', which seemed more appropriate for a vaudevillian.

When we lost him, July 28, 2003, it was one month after his 100th birthday. He reminded me during our last interview that longevity ran in his family. His grandfather Hope died just one month before his 100th birthday.

Over seventy years ago, while appearing on Broadway in the Jerome Kern musical, *Roberta*, he met his wife Dolores Reade. They were married a year later. – It's a charming, romantic story: "One night George Murphy, who was also in the show, asked me if I would like to hear a pretty girl sing. We went over to the Vogue Club where Dolores was singing 'Paper Moon' and several other great ballads. She was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. I met her later that evening and asked her to please come and see me in *Roberta*. She mistakenly thought I was a chorus boy or had a minor role; but when she saw that I was in a leading role she was too embarrassed to come backstage after the show to see me.

"So I went back to see her at the Delmonico Hotel where she was staying. Then she went to Florida and it bothered me that I couldn't see more of her; I kept calling her and I fell into that trap."

Then with a twinkle in his eyes, he said to me as an afterthought, "I should never have gone to that Vogue Club."

It was in a movie musical, *The Big Broadcast of 1938*, that Bob first featured his theme song, 'Thanks for the Memory', with Shirley Ross. Since he has consistently performed parodies of the Leo Robin-Ralph Rainger ballad, I wondered if there had been an occasion when he couldn't remember the original words. "Let me tell you", he confessed, "I would have trouble remembering even one chorus."

Despite his years of international acclaim he saw himself in simple terms as an uncomplicated person. We all have a public image of Bob Hope, but I wondered what image he had of himself. "That's a wonderful question," he responded, "I'll have to think about that. It may take a couple of days. But, put simply, my own image of myself is a fellow working on his golf game and working hard to get laughs." He succeeded in doing just that and kept the world laughing for over sixty years.

And now, in his memory, we say sincerely and lovingly, Thanks For The Memories.

Gord Atkinson

[Editor: Gord Atkinson's 4-Part radio series on 'The Life and Times of Bob Hope' was a 1986 "Gabriel Award" winner from the National Catholic Association of Broadcasters in Los Angeles.]

Keeping Track

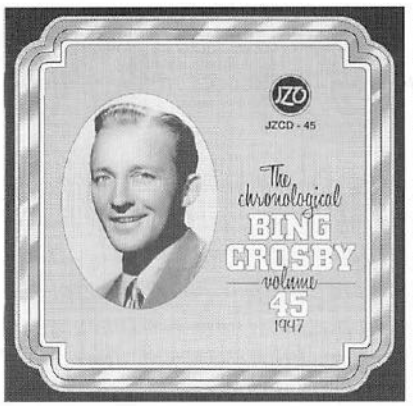
Ken Crossland looks at the new releases.

COMPACT DISCS

The marvelous Jonzo series CDs have been first up in our CD reviews for several issues now and just when I was fearing that this time round we would have to miss out, a card arrived from John McNicholas announcing the availability of the latest two releases.

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 44 Jonzo JZCD-44 UK £10.60
1. Gotta Get Me Somebody To Love 2. What Am I Gonna Do About You? 3. Drifting And Dreaming 4. Friendly Mountains 5. Emperor Waltz 6. I Still Suits Me (with Lee Wiley) 7. White Christmas 8. Silent Night 9. The Christmas Song 10. Anything You Can Do (with The Andrews Sisters & Dick Haymes) 11. There's No Business Like Show Business (with The Andrews Sisters & Dick Haymes) 12. The Small One – Part 1 13. The Small One – Part 2 14. The Small One – Part 3 15. The Small One – Part 4 16. Alexander's Ragtime Band (1)* 17. Alexander's Ragtime Band (2)* 18. Alexander's Ragtime Band (3) 19. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (1)* 20. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (2)* 21. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (3)* 22. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (4)* 23. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (5) 24. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (6)* 25. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (A)
(Tracks 16 to 25 are duets with Al Jolson) *=new to CD

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 45 Jonzo JZCD-45 UK £10.60
1. Go West, Young Man (with The Andrews Sisters) 2. Tallahassee (with The Andrews Sisters) 3. Happy Birthday / Auld Lang Syne (L4398)* 4. Happy Birthday / Auld Lang Syne (L4399)* 5. The Anniversary Song 6. O Fir Tree Dark 7. Nobody* 8. Feudin' And Fightin' 9. Goodbye, My Lover, Goodbye 10. I Do, Do, Do Like You* 11. Kokomo, Indiana* 12. The Old Chaperone* 13. The Freedom Train – A (with The Andrews Sisters) 14. The Freedom Train – ? (with The Andrews Sisters) 15. You Do 16. How Soon? 17. The Whiffenpoof Song 18. Kentucky Babe* 19. Lullaby Land 20. Suspense* 21. You Took Advantage Of Me 22. The Man Without A Country – Part 1* 23. The Man Without A Country – Part 2* 24. The Man Without A Country – Part 3* 25. The Man Without A Country – Part 4*
*=new to CD



Jonzo 44 contains tracks taken from Decca's 16" transcription discs of the Bing and Al Jolson sessions on March 25, 1947. These transcription discs preserved multiple takes of every song being recorded, including false starts and breakdowns. I don't know about you, but I just love being able to peek behind the door of the recording studio and hear what goes on. It's absolutely fascinating to listen to the various takes as Bing and Al Jolson struggle to put their famous duets together. Jonzo 45 has a stack of songs new to CD in great quality. What a wonderful series this is! Well done, John and we look forward to leading off with two more Jonzos next time.

Two other UK releases also take pride of place. Back in the 1980s, there was a series of LPs issued by Crosby collectors in Australia under the title "Good'n Rare". They featured rare Bing recordings that for most collectors had only previously been available as a taped copy of a rare and doubtless scratchy 78. Now, the tradition is continued with an almost identical sounding release by the UK based Sepia label as follows.

Bing Crosby - Good & Rare Sepia Records 1071 UK £6.99
1. The Yodel Blues 2. So In Love 3. Someplace On Anywhere Road 4. So Tall A Tree 5. This Is The Time 6. And You'll Be Home 7. Milady (with Dorothy Kirsten) 8. The Best Thing For You 9. Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo 10. Silver Moon 11. Don't Ever Be Afraid To Go Home 12. On The 10.10 From Ten-Ten Tennessee (with Ben Lessy) 13. Ohio 14. Cela M'est Egal 15. What A Little Moonlight Can Do (with Gary Crosby) 16. My Love, My Love 17. Mon Coeur Est Un Violon 18. La Vie En Rose (W84781) 19. Embrasse-Moi Bien (W84782) 20. Liebchen 21. The River

22. It's Mine, It's Yours 23. The Search Is Through 24. The Land Around Us 25. Let's Harmonize 26. Jim, Johnny And Jonas 27. Farewell

This CD is an absolute gem. Our editor Malcolm had significant input to it and the results bear delicious fruit. All 27 of these tracks appear on an "official" CD release for the first time and the quality is excellent. Even better is the fact that this is in effect a Volume 2 CD to the "Best Of The Early Fifties" that appeared a few years ago on the Spectrum label. The tracks date from 1949 to 1955, which was a very mellow period for the Crosby voice. You must buy this one! It would be great to have a Volume 2 so please support this issue.

The Crosby Brothers **Jasmine Records JASCD 651** **UK** **£9.99**

Disc 1 (Bing) 1. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby 2. Old Folks 3. My Reverie 4. Tea For Two (with Connee Boswell) 5. Yes Indeed (with Connee Boswell) 6. San Antonio Rose 7. It Makes No Difference Now 8. Dolores (with The Merry Macs) 9. Pale Moon (with The Merry Macs) 10. Abraham (film soundtrack – with Louis Beavers & Martha Mears) 11. Lazy 12. Let's Start The New Year Right 13. I've Got Plenty To Be Thankful For 14. I'll Capture Your Heart (with Fred Astaire & Margaret Lenhart) 15. When My Dream Boat Comes Home 16. Walking The Floor Over You 17. That's How Much I Love You 18. Rose Of Santa Rosa 19. A Little Bird Told Me (with Bob Crosby & Peggy Lee – Philco, December 1, 1948) 20. Whispering Hope (with Bob Crosby & Loulie Jean Norman – Chesterfield, November 16, 1949) 21. Enjoy Yourself (with Bob Crosby – Chesterfield, March 1, 1950) 22. Let's Do It Again (with Bob Crosby – Chesterfield, November 15, 1950) 23. Moonlight And Roses (with Bob Crosby – Chesterfield, January 10, 1951) 24. Crosby Medley (with Bob Crosby – Chesterfield, January 10, 1951)

Disc 2 (Bob) 1. You've Got Everything 2. Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Love 3. Sittin' Up Waitin' For You 4. Waitin' At The Gate For Katy 5. I'm Getting Sentimental Over You 6. Basin Street Blues 7. What A Diff'rence A Day Made 8. Love Is Just Around The Corner 9. Here Is My Heart 10. Dinah 11. Lullaby Of Broadway 12. Blue Moon 13. Clouds 14. Everything's Been Done Before 15. Life Is A Song 16. Kiss Me Goodnight 17. The Dixieland Band 18. On Treasure Island 19. A Little Bit Independent 20. Eeny, Meeny, Miney, Mo 21. Oh, You Crazy Moon 22. Do You Care? 23. Where The Blue Of The Night 24. Let's Make Comparisons (from soundtrack of *Two Tickets To Broadway*)

We trailered this item last time and it's now to hand. I must confess that when I first heard of it, I assumed it was a CD that would feature Bing's sons, who were occasionally billed as the Crosby Brothers/Crosby Boys. Wrong! It's a double CD that features one disc of Bing vocals, with brother Bob on the bandstand, plus a second CD of Bob's own vocals.

Geoff Milne has put the whole thing together (following a suggestion from Editor Malcolm) in his usual impeccable style and quality is excellent. Some of the material is very interesting. Most of the stuff on disc 1 is familiar but its nice to have it packaged together, especially the radio duets. Disc 2 shows Bob as a featured vocalist with a variety of bands, including the Dorsey Brothers and Victor Young and as you can see, there is a fair smattering of his brother's famous songs in there. Bob had a pleasant voice and the genes are very apparent. There are times when just for a second, you would mistake him for Bing although when you have listened to a whole song, you appreciate the vagaries of natural selection. Both Crosby brothers had similar vocal architecture and timbre; only one of them had the X-factor.

That's Entertainment (6-CD Box set) **Rhino 73192** **USA** **$89.98**

Disc 2 Going Hollywood - Well, Did You Evah? (with Frank Sinatra) – True Love (with Grace Kelly)
Disc 3 Temptation
Disc 4 Now You Has Jazz (with Louis Armstrong)
Disc 6 Poor Little G-String [Outtake] {From the *March of Time*}
How often do we get the chance to herald the arrival of an undiscovered Bing recording? 'Poor Little G-String' is the song, a title that I sense carries overtones now that are somewhat different from when it was recorded 76 years ago! Greg Van Beek has already covered this item and the appearance of MGM's new "That's Entertainment" box set of soundtrack recordings, so I will say no more other than to endorse Greg's view that it's not to be missed.

Forever Ireland - Bing Crosby's Irish Favourites **K-Tel ECD 3976** **UK** **£4.99**
1. Galway Bay 2. The Isle Of Innisfree 3. I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen 4. My Girl's An Irish Girl 5. Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan 6. The Rose Of Tralee 7. Dear Old Donegal 8. Did Your Mother Come From Ireland? 9. Danny Boy 10. That Tumbledown Shack In Athlone 11. How Can You Buy Killarney? 12. Eileen 13. With My Shillelagh Under My Arm 14. The Donovans 15. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling 16. St Patrick's Day Parade 17. Tobermory Bay 18. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
Hard on the heels of the "Little Bit Of Irish" DVD, we have a nice CD of Bing's emerald output. Familiar titles, but nicely packaged, nice cover and nice price!

As ever, recent months have seen more recycling of standard tracks from our man. Two that caught my eye were these.

Bing Crosby – The Essentials **Big Eye Music 4410** **USA** **$7.98**
1. Where The Blue Of The Night 2. I Surrender Dear 3. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams 4. Dancing In The Dark 5. I'm Thru With Love 6. Just A Gigolo 7. Out Of Nowhere 8. I Found A Million Dollar Baby 9. Sweet And Lovely 10. Stardust 11. Just One More Chance 12 Goodnight Sweetheart

Sing & Swing With Bing Crosby & Friends **Document** **Germany** **£8**
1. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 2. A Couple of Song and Dance Men (with Fred Astaire) 3. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 4. The Moon Came Up With a Great Idea Last Night (with Peggy Lee) 5. The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (with Al Jolson) 6. Zing a Little Zong (with Jane Wyman) 7. Put It There, Pal (with Bob Hope) 8. The Three Caballeros (with The Andrews Sisters) 9. Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries (with the Mills Brothers) 10. Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean (with Johnny Mercer) 11. Connecticut (with Judy Garland) 12. A Fine Romance (with Dixie Lee Crosby) 13. Small Fry (with Johnny Mercer) 14. Dinah (with The Mills Brothers) 15.Shine (with The Mills Brothers) 16. Pistol Packin' Mama (with The Andrews Sisters) 17. The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid (With Mary Martin & Jack Teagarden) 18. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 20. Pennies from Heaven 21.You Made Me Love You (with The Merry Macs) 22. I Ain't Got Nobody 23.It Must Be True 24. Ciribiribin (with The Andrews Sisters) 25. When My Dreamboat Comes Home 26. I'll Capture Your Heart (with Fred Astaire) 27. Dolores (with The Merry Macs) 28. Birds of a Feather 29. Yodelin' Jive (with The Andrews Sisters) 30. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 31. Yes Indeed! (with Connee Boswell) 32. Birth Of The Blues 33. Sunday, Monday or Always 34. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 35. Mine (with Judy Garland) 36. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby (with The Andrews Sisters) 37. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (Talk, Talk, Talk) (with Judy Garland) 38. San Fernando Valley 39. There's A Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie (with The Andrews Sisters) 40. Swinging On A Star 41. South Rampart St Parade (with The Andrews Sisters)

DVD

Plenty of DVD activity in the UK this quarter, although much of it is the UK catching up with US releases.

Screen Legends - Road To Zanzibar / Going My Way / Holiday Inn / Pennies From Heaven
4 Front Video **Region 2** **£18**
Of the quartet of films presented here, only *Pennies From Heaven* will leap out at most UK buyers, and even that has been around on Region 1 for some considerable time. Nice packaging and nice to see what were arguably Bing's two definitive films – *Holiday Inn* and *Going My Way* – included.

The Bing Crosby Collection was a handsome set of US releases a few years back, each offering two movies on one DVD. Now the series is available in Region 2 format as follows:

Bing Crosby Collection - Birth Of The Blues / Blue Skies

Bing Crosby Collection - The Emperor Waltz / A Connecticut Yankee

Bing Crosby Collection – Rhythm On The Range/Rhythm On The River

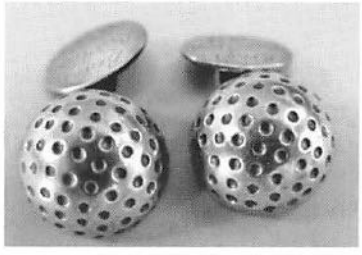
Bing Crosby Collection – Going My Way/Bells Of St Mary's
Each of these is now released by Universal Pictures Video, although at £15.99, they are not the best value. However,

Universal have also released a boxed set of the above 8 movies plus a ninth bonus inclusion, *Holiday Inn*, all for £34.99 and that's certainly a better deal. Pick of the bunch for me would be the two "Rhythm" pictures, and it's especially nice to now have a fine quality print of Bing's "Empty Saddles" rendition readily available.

Let's Make Love **20th Century Fox Home Entertainment** **Region 2** **£8.00**
Bing's appearance in this 1960 Marilyn Monroe feature was strictly cameo, a three-minute singing lesson for Monroe's would-be suitor, Yves Montand. "I hope you can kiss better than you can sing" was Bing's summing-up of his French pupil!

3 Classic Hope And Crosby Features Of The Silver Screen **Region 0** **£4.99**
A three-on-one DVD on the Classic Entertainment label, but slightly misleading because there is one Hope solo feature (*My Favourite Brunette*), *Road to Bali*, and then *Road To Hollywood*, which was of course a compilation of Bing's early movie outings rather than one of the Road series. Good price if you are missing any of these.

WHAT'S ON THE WEB?



What would give for a pair of Bing Pro-Am cufflinks for 1952? Not $1450 it would seem as a pair recently offered on eBay with that as the starting price found no bidders, despite being made by Bailey, Banks & Biddle, who sound like solicitors but are, I'm told, premier league jewellery makers since the early 19th century. And if you want some higher stakes, how about a 1942 baseball signed by baseball legend Ty Cobb and by Bing at a golf event that year. At the time of going to press, Sotheby's in New York were about to auction this with an expected yield of $15000! I sense a raised Crosby eyebrow somewhere in the celestial halls!

Happy hunting!

Ken Crossland
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Announcement
THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY - UK Branch
41st ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING
Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1st. 2006, 3pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting. This is the 41st. annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times and as usual we shall hve some interesting DVD material for you to see, using the excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall available for this purpose.

A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £23 per person (£20 for the meal, £3 for room-hire expenses) to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

Bing Crosby

Las Cruces
May 19, 1969

Dear John:

Congratulations on the award you recently received. Richly deserved, I'm sure.

Glad you like the "Hey Jude" album. It was quite exciting, working with an orchestra of this type, and I was thrilled by the arrangements.

Jimmy Bowen is talking about doing something else, but until I get back from Mexico, where I'm currently with the family, nothing definite will be decided.

I'm hopeful it can be worked out, because Jimmy Bowen is a very progressive young man with good ideas, and excellent taste.

He seems to have confidence in his ability to cut something by me that will be successful. I personally think he's more adventurous than prudent -

Always yours,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

Mr. John B. Elwood
1204 First Street
Jackson, Michigan 49203

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